

1509/750

WIVES AS THEY WERE,

AND

MAIDS AS THEY ARE.

A

C O M E D Y,

IN FIVE ACTS.

PERFORMED AT THE

THEATRE ROYAL, COVENT-GARDEN,

THIRD EDITION.

BY

MRS. INCHBALD.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR G. G. AND J. ROBINSON, PATERNOSTER-ROW.

1797.



PROLOGUE,

BY A FRIEND;

SPOKEN BY MR. WADDY.

I COME not to announce a bashful maid
Who ne'er has try'd the drama's doubtful trade,
Who sees with flutt'ring hope the curtain rise,
And scans with timid glance your critic eyes;
My client is a more experienc'd dame,
Tho' not a Veteran, not unknown to Fame,
Who thinks your favours are an honest boast,
Yet fears to forfeit what she values most;
Who has, she trusts, some character to lose,
E'en tho' the woman did not aid the Muse;
Who courts with modest aim the public smile,
That stamp of merit, and that meed of toil.
At Athens once (our author has been told)
The Comic Muse, irregularly bold,
With living calumny profan'd her stage,
And forg'd the frailties of the faultless sage.
Such daring ribaldry you need not fear,
We have no Socrates to libel here.
Ours are the follies of an humbler flight,
Offspring of manners volatile and light;
Our gen'ral satire keeps more knaves in awe,
Our court of conscience comes in aid of law.
Here scourg'd by wit, and pilloried by fun,
Ten thousand coxcombs blush instead of *one*.
If scenes like these could make the guilty shrink,
Could teach unfeeling Folly how to think,
Check Affectation's voluble career,
And from cold Fashion force the struggling tear,

Our

Our author would your loudest praise forego,
 Content to feel within "what passes show."
 "But since" (she says) "such hopes cannot be mine;
 "Such bold pretensions I must needs resign,
 "Tell these great judges of dramatic laws,
 "Their reformation were my best applause;
 "Yet if the heart my proud appeal withstands,
 "I ask the humbler suffrage of their hands."

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

M E N.

LORD PRIORY	-	-	-	-	<i>Mr. Quick.</i>
SIR WILLIAM DORRILLON	-	-	-	-	<i>Mr. Munden.</i>
SIR GEORGE EVELYN	-	-	-	-	<i>Mr. Pope.</i>
MR. BRONZELY	-	-	-	-	<i>Mr. Lewis.</i>
MR. NORBERRY	-	-	-	-	<i>Mr. Waddy.</i>
OLIVER	-	-	-	-	<i>Mr. Fawcett.</i>
NABSON	-	-	-	-	<i>Mr. Thompson.</i>

W O M E N.

LADY PRIORY	-	-	-	-	<i>Miss Chapman.</i>
LADY MARY RAFFLE	-	-	-	-	<i>Mrs. Mattocks.</i>
MISS DORRILLON	-	-	-	-	<i>Miss Wallis.</i>

Several Servants, &c.

SCENE, London.



WIVES AS THEY WERE.

AND

MAIDS AS THEY ARE.

A C T I.

SCENE I. *An Apartment at Mr. NORBERRY'S.*

*Enter Sir WILLIAM DORRILLON, followed by
Mr. NORBERRY.*

Mr. NORBERRY.

WHY blame me? — Why blame me? — My sister had the sole management of your daughter by your own authority, from the age of six years, till within eight months of the present time, when, in consequence of my sister's death, she was transferred to my protection.

Sir WILLIAM.

Your sister, Mr. Norberry, was a prudent, good woman—she never could instruct her in all this vice.

Mr. NORBERRY.

Depend upon it, my dear friend, that miss Dorillon, your daughter, came to my house just the same heedless woman of fashion you now see her.

Sir WILLIAM [impatiently.]

Very well—'Tis very well.—But, when I think on my disappointment —

B

Mr.

Mr. NORBERRY.

There is nothing which may not be repaired.
Maria, with you for a guide ———

Sir WILLIAM.

Me! She turns me into ridicule—laughs at me! This morning, as she was enumerating some of her frivolous expences, she observed me lift up my hands and sigh; on which she named fifty other extravagances she had no occasion to mention, merely to enjoy the pang which every folly of hers sends to my heart.

Mr. NORBERRY.

But do not charge this conduct of your daughter to the want of filial love:—did she know you were sir William Dorrillon, did she know you were her father, every word you uttered, every look you glanced, would be received with gentleness and submission:—but your present rebukes from Mr. Mandred (as you are called), from a perfect stranger, as she supposes, she considers as an impertinence which she has a right to resent.

Sir WILLIAM.

I wish I had continued abroad. And yet, the hope of beholding her, and of bestowing upon her the riches I acquired, was my sole support through all the toils by which I gained them.

Mr. NORBERRY.

And, considering her present course of life, your riches could not come more opportunely.

Sir WILLIAM.

She shall never have a farthing of them. Do you think I have encountered the perils of almost every climate, to squander my hard-earned fortune upon the paltry vicious pleasures in which she delights? No.—I have been now in your house exactly a month—I will stay but one day longer—and then,



then, without telling her who I am, I will leave the kingdom and her for ever——Nor shall she know that this insignificant merchant whom she despises, was her father, till he is gone, never to be recalled.

Mr. NORBERRY.

You are offended with some justice: but, as I have often told you, your excessive delicacy and respect for the conduct of the other sex, degenerate into rigour.

Sir WILLIAM.

True—for what I see so near perfection as woman, I want to see perfect. *We*, Mr. Norberry, can never be perfect; but surely women, women, might easily be made angels!

Mr. NORBERRY.

And if they were, we should soon be glad to make them into women again.

Sir WILLIAM [*inattentive to Mr. NORBERRY.*]
—*She sets the example. She gives the fashion!*—and now your whole house, and all your visitors, in imitation of *her*, treat me with levity, or with contempt.—But I'll go away to-morrow.

Mr. NORBERRY.

Can you desert your child in the moment she most wants your protection? That exquisite beauty just now mature ——

Sir WILLIAM.

There's my difficulty!—There's my struggle!—If she were not so like her mother, I could leave her without a pang—cast her off, and think no more of her.—But that shape! that face! those speaking looks! Yet, how reversed!—Where is the diffidence, the humility—where is the simplicity of my beloved wife? Buried in her grave.

WIVES AS THEY WERE,

Mr. NORBERRY.

And, in all this great town, you may never see even its apparition.

Sir WILLIAM.

I rejoice, however, at the stratagem by which I have gained a knowledge of her heart : deprived of the means of searching it in her early years, had I at present come as her father, she might have deceived me with counterfeit manners, till time disclosed the imposition.——Now at least, I am not imposed upon.

Enter SERVANT.

SERVANT.

Lord Priory.

*[Exit.**Sir WILLIAM.*

Lord Priory!

Mr. NORBERRY.

An old acquaintance of mine, though we seldom meet. He has some singularities; and yet, perhaps ———

*Enter Lord PRIORY.**Mr. NORBERRY.*

My dear Lord, I am glad to see you. Mr. Mandred [*introducing Sir WILLIAM*]. My Lord, I hope I see you in perfect health.

Lord PRIORY.

Yes : but in very ill humour. I came to London early this morning with my family for the winter, and found my house, after going through only a slight repair, so damp, that I dare not sleep in it : and so I am now sending and going all over the town to seek for lodgings.

Mr.

Mr. NORBERRY.

Then seek no farther, but take up your lodgings here.

Lord PRIORY.

To be plain with you, I called in hopes you would ask me; for I am so delicately scrupulous in respect to lady Priory, that I could not bear the thought of taking her to an hotel.

Mr. NORBERRY.

Then pray return home, and bring her hither immediately, with all your luggage.

Lord PRIORY.

I am most extremely obliged to you [*very fervently*]; for into no one house belonging to any of my acquaintance would I take my wife, so soon as into yours. I have now been married eleven years, and during all that time I have made it a rule never to go on a visit, so as to domesticate, in the house of a married man.

Sir WILLIAM.

May I enquire the reason of that?

Lord PRIORY.

It is because I am married myself; and having always treated my wife according to the ancient mode of treating wives, I would rather she should never be an eye-witness to the modern household management.

Sir WILLIAM.

The ancients, I believe, were very affectionate to their wives.

Lord PRIORY.

And they had reason to be so; for their wives obeyed them. The ancients seldom gave them the liberty to do wrong: but modern wives do as they like.

Mr.

Mr. NORBERRY.

And don't you suffer Lady Priory to do as she likes?

Lord PRIORY.

Yes, when it is what I like too. But never, never else.

Sir WILLIAM.

Does not this draw upon you the character of an unkind husband?

Lord PRIORY.

That I am proud of. Did you never observe, that seldom a breach of fidelity in a wife is exposed, where the unfortunate husband is not said to be "the best creature in the world! Poor man, so good-natured!—Doatingly fond of his wife!—Indulged her in every thing!—How cruel in her to serve him so!" Now, if I am served *so*, it shall not be for my good-nature.

Mr. NORBERRY.

But I hope you equally disapprove of every severity.

Lord PRIORY [*rapidly*].

What do you mean by severity?

Mr. NORBERRY.

You know you used to be rather violent in your temper.

Lord PRIORY.

So I am still—apt to be hasty and passionate—but that is rather of advantage to me as a husband—it causes me to be obeyed without hesitation—no liberty for contention, tears, or repining. I insure conjugal sunshine, by now and then introducing a storm; while some husbands never see any thing but a cloudy sky, and all for the want of a little domestic thunder to clear away the vapours.

Sir

Sir WILLIAM.

I have long conceived indulgence to be the bane of female happiness.

Lord PRIORY.

And so it is.—I know several women of fashion, who will visit six places of different amusement on the same night, have company at home besides, and yet, for want of something more, they'll be out of spirits: my wife never goes to a public place, has scarce ever company at home, and yet is always in spirits.

Sir WILLIAM.

Never visits operas, or balls, or routs?

Lord PRIORY.

How should she? She goes to bed every night exactly at ten.

Mr. NORBERRY.

In the name of wonder, how have you been able to bring her to that?

Lord PRIORY.

By making her rise every morning at five.

Mr. NORBERRY.

And so she becomes tired before night.

Lord PRIORY.

Tired to death. Or, if I see her eyes completely open at bed-time, and she asks me to play one game more at picquet, the next morning I jog her elbow at half after four.

Mr. NORBERRY.

But suppose she does not reply to the signal?

Lord PRIORY.

Then I turn the key of the door when I leave the chamber; and there I find her when I come home in the evening.

Sir WILLIAM.

And without her having seen a creature all day?

Lord

Lord PRIORY.

That is in my favour; for not having seen a single soul, she is rejoiced even to see *me*.

Mr. NORBERRY.

And will she speak to you after such usage?

Lord PRIORY.

If you only considered how much a woman longs to speak after being kept a whole day silent, you would not ask that question.

Mr. NORBERRY.

Well! this is the most surprising method!

Lord PRIORY.

Not at all. In ancient days, when manners were simple and pure, did not wives wait at the table of their husbands? and did not angels witness the subordination? I have taught Lady Priory to practise the same humble docile obedience—to pay respect to her husband in every shape and every form—no careless inattention to *me*—no smiling politeness to others in preference to *me*—no putting *me* up in a corner—in all assemblies, she considers her husband as the first person.

Sir WILLIAM.

I am impatient to see her.

Lord PRIORY.

But don't expect a fine lady with high feathers, and the *et cætera* of an Eastern concubine; you will see a modest plain Englishwoman, with a cap on her head, a handkerchief on her neck, and a gown of our own manufacture.

Sir WILLIAM.

My friend Norberry, what a contrast must there be between Lady Priory and the ladies in this house!

Lord PRIORY [starting.]

Have you ladies in this house?

AND MAIDS AS THEY ARE.

29

Mr. NORBERRY.

Don't be alarmed; they are both single, and can give Lady Priory no ideas concerning the marriage state.

Lord PRIORY.

Are you sure of that? Some single women are more informed than their friends believe.

Mr. NORBERRY.

For these ladies, notwithstanding a few (what you would call) excesses, I will answer.

Lord PRIORY.

Well, then, I and my wife will be with you about nine in the evening; you know we go to-bed at ten.

Mr. NORBERRY.

But remember you bring your own servants to wait on you at five in the morning.

Lord PRIORY.

I shall bring but one—my old servant Oliver, who knows all my customs so well, that I never go any where without him.

Mr. NORBERRY.

And is that old servant your valet still?

Lord PRIORY.

No, he is now a kind of gentleman in waiting. I have had no employment for a valet since I married:—my wife, for want of dissipation, has not only time to attend upon herself, but upon me. Do you think I could suffer a clumsy man to tie on my neckcloth, or comb out my hair, when the soft, delicate, and tender hands of my wife are at my command? [Exit.

Sir WILLIAM.

After this amiable description of a woman, how can I endure to see her, whom reason bids me detest; but whom nature still—

C

Mr.

Mr. NORBERRY.

Here she comes; and her companion in folly along with her.

Sir WILLIAM.

There's another woman! that Lady Mary Raffle! How can you suffer such people in your house?

Mr. NORBERRY.

She is only on a visit for a few months—she comes every winter, as her family and mine have long been intimately connected.

Sir WILLIAM.

Let us go. Let us go. I can't bear the sight of them.

[*Going.*]

Mr. NORBERRY.

Stay, and for *once* behave with politeness and good humour to your daughter—do—and I dare venture my life, she will neither insult nor treat you with disrespect. You know you always begin first.

Sir WILLIAM.

Have not I a right to begin first?

Mr. NORBERRY.

But that is a right of which she is ignorant.

Sir WILLIAM.

And deserves to be so, and ever shall be so. “I stay and treat her with politeness and good-humour?” No—rather let her kneel and implore my pardon.

Mr. NORBERRY.

Suffer me to reveal who you are, and so she will.

Sir WILLIAM.

If you expose me only by one insinuation to her knowledge, our friendship is that moment at an end.

Mr,

Mr. NORBERRY [*Firmly.*]

I have already given you my promise on that subject; and you may rely upon it.

Sir WILLIAM.

I thank you—I believe you—and I thank you.

[*Exeunt Sir William and Mr. Norberry.*]

Enter Lady MARY RAFFLE and Miss DORRILLON.

Miss DORRILLON [*Stealing on as Mr. Norberry and Sir William leave the stage.*]

They are gone. Thank heaven they are gone out of this room, for I expect a dozen visitors; and Mr. Norberry looks so gloomy upon me, he puts me out of spirits: while that Mr. Mandred's peevishness is not to be borne.

Lady MARY.

Be satisfied; for you were tolerably severe upon him this morning in your turn.

Miss DORRILLON.

Why, I am vext—and I don't like to be found fault with in my best humour, much less when I have so many things to tease me.

Lady MARY.

What are they?

Miss DORRILLON.

I have now lost all my money, and all my jewels, at play; it is almost two years since I have received a single remittance from my father; and Mr. Norberry refuses to advance me a shilling more.—What I shall do to discharge a debt which must be paid either to-day or to-morrow, heaven knows!—Dear Lady Mary, you could not lend me a small sum, could you?

Lady MARY.

Who? I! [*with surprise*].—My dear creature, it was the very thing I was going to ask of you: for

when you have money, I know no one so willing to disperse it among her friends.

Miss DORRILLON.

Am not I?—I protest I love to part with my money; for I know with what pleasure I receive it myself, and I like to see that joy sparkle in another's eye, which has so often brightened my own. But last night ruined me—I must have money somewhere.—As you can't assist me, I must ask Mr. Norberry for his carriage, and immediately go in search of some friend that can lend me four, or five, or six, or seven hundred pounds. But the worst is, I have lost my credit—Is not that dreadful?

Lady MARY.

Yes, yes, I know what it is. [*Shaking her head.*]

Miss DORRILLON.

What will become of me?

Lady MARY.

Why don't you marry, and throw all your misfortunes upon your husband?

Miss DORRILLON.

Why don't you marry? For you have as many to throw.

Lady MARY.

But not so many lovers who would be willing to receive the load. I have no Sir George Evelyn with ten thousand pounds a year—no Mr. Bronzely.

Miss DORRILLON.

If you have not now, you once had; for I am sure Bronzely once paid his addresses to you.

Lady MARY.

And you have the vanity to suppose you took him from me?

Miss DORRILLON.

Silence.—Reserve your anger to defend, and not

to attack me. [We should be allies by the common ties of poverty: and 'tis time to arm; for here's the enemy.]

Enter Sir WILLIAM with Mr. NORBERRY.

Sir WILLIAM.

They are here still. [*Afide to Mr. Norberry, and offering to go back.*]

Mr. NORBERRY [*Preventing him.*]

No, no.

Miss DORRILLON.

I have been waiting here, Mr. Norberry, to ask a favour of you. [*He and Sir William come forward*] Will you be so kind as to lend me your carriage for a couple of hours?

Mr. NORBERRY.

Mr. Mandred [*pointing to Sir William*] has just asked me for it to take him into the city.

Lady MARY.

Oh, Mr. Mandred will give it up to Miss Dorrillon, I am sure: he can defer his business till to-morrow.

Sir WILLIAM.

No, madam, she may as well put off hers. I have money to receive, and I can't do it.

Miss DORRILLON.

I have money to pay, and I can't do it.

Lady MARY.

If one is going to receive, and the other to pay money, I think the best way is for you to go together; and then, what deficiency there is on one side, the other may supply.

Miss DORRILLON.

Will you consent, Mr. Mandred?—Come, do; and I'll be friends with you.

Sir

Sir WILLIAM [*Aside.*]

"She'll be friends with me!"

Miss DORRILLON.

Will you?

Sir WILLIAM.

No.

Miss DORRILLON.

Well, I certainly can ask a favour of Mr. Married better than I can of any person in the world.

Mr. NORBERRY.

Why so, Maria?

Miss DORRILLON.

Because, instead of pain, I can see it gives him pleasure to refuse me.

Sir WILLIAM.

I never confer a favour, of the most trivial kind, where I have no esteem.

Miss DORRILLON [*Proudly.*]

Nor would I receive a favour, of the most trivial kind, from one who has not liberality to esteem me.

Mr. NORBERRY.

Come, Miss Dorrillon, do not grow serious: laugh as much as you please, but say nothing that —

Sir WILLIAM [*To her impatiently.*]

From whom then can you ever receive favours, except from the vain, the idle, and the depraved? — from those whose lives are passed in begging them of others?

Miss DORRILLON.

They are the persons who know best how to bestow them: for my part, had I not sometimes felt what it was to want a friend, I might never have had humanity to be the friend of another.

Enter

Enter SERVANT.

SERVANT.

Sir George Evelyn.

Mr. NORBERRY.

And pray, my dear, whose friend have you ever been? — [*Enter Sir GEORGE EVELYN.*] — Not Sir George Evelyn's, I am sure; and yet he of all others deserves your friendship most.

Miss DORRILLON.

But friendship will not content him: as soon as he thought he had gained that —

Sir GEORGE.

He aspired to the supreme happiness of your love.

Miss DORRILLON.

Now you talk of "supreme happiness," have you provided tickets for the fête on Thursday?

Sir GEORGE.

I have; provided you have obtained Mr. Norberry's leave to go.

Mr. NORBERRY.

That I cannot grant.

Miss DORRILLON.

Nay, my dear Sir, do not force me to go without it.

Sir WILLIAM [*With violence.*]

Would you dare?

Miss DORILLON [*Looking with surprise.*]

"Would I dare," Mr. Mandred! — and what have you to say if I do?

Sir WILLIAM [*Recollecting himself.*]

I was only going to say, that if you did, and I were Mr. Norberry —

Miss

Miss DORRILLON.

And if you *were* Mr. Norberry, and treated me in the manner you now do, depend upon it I should not think your approbation or disapprobation, your pleasure or displeasure, of the slightest consequence.

Sir WILLIAM [Greatly agitated.]

I dare say not—I dare say not. Good morning, Sir George—I dare say not.—Good morning, Mr. Norberry. [*Going.*]

Mr. NORBERRY.

Stop a moment.—Maria, you have offended Mr. Mandred.

Miss DORRILLON.

He has offended me.

Sir WILLIAM [At the door, going off.]

I shan't offend you long.

Mr. NORBERRY [Going to him, and taking him by the arm.]

Stay, Mr. Mandred: Miss Dorrillon, make an apology: Mr. Mandred is my friend, and you must not treat him with this levity.

Lady MARY.

No, no apology.

Miss DORRILLON.

No, no apology. But I'll tell you what I'll do. [*Goes up to Sir William.*]
—If Mr. Mandred likes, I'll shake hands with him—and we'll be good friends for the future. But then, don't find fault with me—I can't bear it. You don't like to be found fault with, yourself—You look as cross as any thing every time I say the least word against you. Come, shake hands; and don't let us see one another's failings for the future.

Sir WILLIAM.

There is no future for the trial.

Miss

Miss DORRILLON.

How do you mean?

Mr. NORBERRY.

Mr. Mandred sets off again for India to-morrow.

Miss DORRILLON.

Indeed! I thought he was come to live in England! I am sorry you are going.

Sir WILLIAM [with earnestness.]

Why sorry?

Miss DORRILLON.

Because we have so frequently quarrelled. I am always unhappy when I am going to be parted from a person with whom I have disagreed; I often think I could part with less regret from a friend.

Sir GEORGE.

Not, I suppose, if the quarrel is forgiven?

Miss DORRILLON.

Ah! but Mr. Mandred does not forgive! no! in his looks I can always see resentment.—Sometimes indeed I have traced a spark of kindness, and have gently tried to blow it to a little flame of friendship; when, with one hasty puff I have put it out.

Sir WILLIAM.

You are right. It is—I believe—extinguished.

[Exit; Mr. Norberry following.]

Sir GEORGE.

A very singular man.

Lady MARY.

Oh! if he was not rich, there would be no bearing him—Indeed he seems to have lost all his friends; for during the month he has been here, I never found he had any one acquaintance out of this house.

Miss DORRILLON.

And what is very strange, he has taken an aver-
D sion

sion to me.—But it is still more strange, that although I know he has, yet in my heart I like *him*. He is morose to an insufferable degree; but then, when by chance he speaks kind, you cannot imagine how it soothes me.—He wants compassion and all the tender virtues; and yet, I frequently think, that if any serious misfortune were to befall me, he would be the first person to whom I should fly to complain.

Lady MARY.

Then why don't you fly and tell him of your misfortune last night.

Sir GEORGE [starting.]

What misfortune?

Miss DORRILLON [to Lady MARY.]

Hush!

Lady MARY.

A loss at play.—[*To Miss Dorrillon.*—I beg your pardon, but it was out before you said hush.

Sir GEORGE.

Ah! Maria, will you still risk your own and my happiness?

Miss DORRILLON.

Your happiness and mine, Sir!—I beg you will not place them so near to each other.

Sir GEORGE.

Mine is so firmly fixed on you, it can only exist in yours.

Lady MARY.

Then, when she is married to Mr. Bronzely, you will be happy because she will be so?

Sir GEORGE.

Bronzely! has he dared?

Miss DORRILLON.

Have not *you* dared, Sir?

Lady

Lady MARY.

But I believe Mr. Bronzely is the most daring of the two.—[*aside to Sir George.*]—Take care of him.
[*Exit.*]

Sir GEORGE.

Miss Dorrillon, I will not affront you by supposing that you mean seriously to receive the addresses of Mr. Bronzely; but I warn you against giving others, who know you less than I do, occasion to think so.

Miss DORRILLON.

I never wish to deceive any one — I do admit of Mr. Bronzely's addresses.

Sir GEORGE.

Why, he is the professed lover of your friend Lady Mary! or granting he denies it, and that I even pass over the frivolity of the coxcomb, still he is unworthy of you.

Miss DORRILLON.

He says the same of you; and half a dozen more say exactly the same of each other. If you like, I'll discard every one of you as unworthy; but if I retain you, I will retain the rest. Which do you choose?

Sir GEORGE.

I submit to any thing rather than the total loss of you—But remember, that your felicity—

Miss DORRILLON.

“Felicity! felicity!”—ah! that is a word not to be found in the vocabulary of my sensations!—
[*sighing.*]

Sir GEORGE.

I believe you, and have always regarded you with a compassion that has augmented my love. In your infancy, deprived of the watchful eye and anxious tenderness of a mother; the manly caution

and authority of a father ; misled by the brilliant vapour of fashion ; surrounded by enemies in the garb of friends—Ah ! do you weep ? blessed, blessed be the sign !—Suffer me to dry those tears I have caused, and to give you a knowledge of true felicity.

Miss DORRILLON [*recovering.*]

I am very angry with myself.—Don't, I beg, tell Mr. Norberry or Mr. Mandred you saw me cry—they'll suppose I have been more indiscreet [*stifling her tears*] than I really have. For in reality I have nothing—

Sir GEORGE.

Do not endeavour to conceal from me, what my tender concern for you has given me the means to become acquainted with. I know you are plunged in difficulties by your father neither sending nor coming, as you once expected : I know you are still deeper plunged by your fondness for play.

Miss DORRILLON.

Very well, Sir ! proceed.

Sir GEORGE.

Thus, then—Suffer me to send my steward to you this morning ; he shall regulate your accounts, and place them in a state that shall protect you from further embarrassment till your father sends to you ; or protect you from his reproaches, should he arrive.

Miss DORRILLON.

Sir George, I have listened to your detail of vices which I acknowledge, with patience, with humility—but your suspicion of those which I have *not*, I treat with pride, with indignation.

Sir GEORGE.

How ! suspicion !

Miss DORRILLON.

What part of my conduct, Sir, has made you dare to suppose I would extricate myself from the difficulties that surround me, by the influence I hold over the weakness of a lover ? [*Exeunt separately.*]

A C T II.

SCENE I. *Another Apartment at Mr. NORBERRY'S.*

Enter two Porters from an upper Entrance, bringing in Trunks; Lord PRIORY and Mr. NORBERRY following.

Mr. NORBERRY.

HERE, Stephens, why are you out of the way? Shew the men with these boxes into the dressing-room appointed for my Lord Priory.

[A Servant enters on the opposite side, and the Porters follow him off at a lower entrance on that side.]

Enter Sir WILLIAM DORRILLON.

Sir WILLIAM.

My Lord, I hope I see you well this evening.

Lord PRIORY.

Yes, Sir—and you find I have literally accepted Mr. Norberry's invitation, and am come to him with all my luggage.

Enter OLIVER with a small box in each hand.

Lord PRIORY.

Follow those men with the trunks, Oliver.

Mr. NORBERRY.

Ah, Mr. Oliver, how do you do?

OLIVER.

Pretty well—tolerably well, I thank you, Sir.

[Exit.]

Enter SERVANT.

Lady Priory.

Enter

WIVES AS THEY WERE,

Enter Lady PRIORY.

Lord PRIORY [to her.]

Mr. Norberry, our worthy host; and Mr. Mandred. *[She curtsies.]*

Mr. NORBERRY.

I hope your ladyship will find my house so little inconvenient to you, as to induce you to make no very short visit.

Lady PRIORY.

I have no doubt, Sir, but I shall find, from your friendship, every comfort in this house which it is possible for me to enjoy out of my own.

Enter Lady MARY RAFFLE and Miss DORRILLON.

Mr. NORBERRY [introducing them.]

Lady Priory—Lady Mary Raffle—Miss DorriHon—Lord Priory.

Lady MARY.

Permit me, Lady Priory, to take you to the next room: we are going to have tea immediately.

Lady PRIORY.

I have drank tea, Madam.

Miss DORRILLON.

Already! It is only nine o'clock.

Lady PRIORY.

Then it is near my hour of going to bed.

[Lord Priory, Sir William, and Mr. Norberry, retire to the back of the stage, and talk apart.]

Lady MARY.

Go to bed already! In the name of wonder, what time did you rise this morning?

Lady PRIORY.

Why, I do think it was almost six o'clock.

Lady MARY [in amaze.]

And were you up at six this morning?

Lady

Lady PRIORY.

Yes.

Miss DORRILLON.

At six in the month of January!

Lady MARY.

It is not light till eight: and what good, now, could you possibly be doing for two hours by candle-light?

Lady PRIORY.

Pray, Lady Mary, at what time did you go to bed?

Lady MARY.

About three this morning.

Lady PRIORY.

And what good could you possibly be doing for eleven hours by candle-light?

Lady MARY.

Good! It's as much as can be expected from a woman of fashion, if she does no harm.

Lady PRIORY.

But I should fear you would do a great deal of harm to your health, your spirits, and the tranquillity of your mind.

[*Mr. Norberry goes off—Lord Priory and Sir William come forward.*]

Lady MARY.

Oh, my Lord Priory, I really find all the accounts I have heard of your education for a wife to be actually true!—and I can't help laughing to think, if you and I had chanced to have married together, what a different creature you most likely would have made of me, to what I am at present!

Lord PRIORY.

Yes; and what a different creature you most likely would have made of *me*, to what I am at present.

Sir

Sir WILLIAM.

Lady Priory, I am not accustomed to pay compliments, or to speak my approbation, even when praise is a just tribute; but your virtues compel me to an eulogium.—That wise submission to a husband who loves you, that cheerful smile so expressive of content, and that plain dress which indicates the elegance as well as the simplicity, of your mind, are all symbols of a heart so unlike to those which the present fashion of the day has misled—

Miss DORRILLON.

Why look so steadfastly on me, Mr. Mandred? Do you pretend to see my heart?

Sir WILLIAM.

Have you any?

Miss DORRILLON.

Yes; and one large enough to hold—even my enemy.

Enter SERVANT.

SERVANT.

Mr. Bronzely.

Miss DORRILLON.

Shew him into the other room. [*Exit Servant.*] Come, Lady Priory, we must introduce you to Mr. Bronzely: he is one of the most fashionable, agreeable, pleasant, whimsical, unthinking, and spirited creatures in all the world: you'll be charmed—

Lady PRIORY.

I dare say it's near ten o'clock. I am afraid I shan't be able to keep awake.

Miss DORRILLON.

You must—We are going to have a little concert—'Twill be impossible to sleep.

[*Exit Miss Dorrillon, leading off Lady Priory.*]

Lady MARY.

Upon my word, my Lord, your plan of management has made your wife unfit for company.

Lord PRIORY.

So much more fit to be a wife.

Lady MARY.

She is absolutely fatigued with hard labour—for shame!—How does household drudgery become her hand?

Lord PRIORY.

Much better than cards and dice do yours.

[Exit Lady Mary followed by Lord Priory—

Sir William is left on the stage alone.]

Sir WILLIAM.

She “has a heart large enough to receive her enemy.”—And by that enemy she means her father. *[He sits down, and shews marks of inquietude.]*

Enter Sir GEORGE EVELYN.

Sir GEORGE.

I beg your pardon, Mr. Mandred—I hope I don't interrupt you—I only wished to speak to Miss Dorillon.

Sir WILLIAM.

She is just gone into the next room.

Sir GEORGE.

To the concert?

Sir WILLIAM.

Are not you invited?

Sir GEORGE.

Yes; but before I go in, I wish to know who are the company.—Can you tell whether—a Mr. Bronzely is there?

Sir WILLIAM.

I know he is.

E

Sir

Sir GEORGE.

Are you acquainted with him?

Sir WILLIAM.

I have met him here frequently.

Sir GEORGE.

And are you *certain* he is here at present?

Sir WILLIAM.

I have reason to be certain.

Sir GEORGE.

Any particular reason?

Sir WILLIAM.

Your mistress, when his name was announced, went out to him, exclaiming, "he was the most charming and accomplished man in the world."

Sir GEORGE [*greatly agitated.*]

She loves him, Sir—I have reason to believe—to know she loves him. Thus she gives up my happiness and her own, to gratify the vanity of a man who has no real regard for her; but whose predominant passion is to enjoy the villanous name of a general seducer.

Sir WILLIAM [*rising.*]

Why do you suffer it?

Sir GEORGE.

Hush! Don't repeat what I have said, or I lose her for ever. I am at present under her resentment; and have just sent into the next room, to ask, if she were there, to speak with her.

Enter Miss DORRILLON.

Miss DORRILLON.

And is it possible I was sent for by you?

Sir GEORGE.

Don't be offended, that I should be uneasy, and come to atone —

Miss

Miss DORRILLON.

I can't forgive you, Sir ; 'tis impossible. [*Going.*

Sir GEORGE.

You pardon those, Maria, who offend you more.

Sir WILLIAM.

But an ungrateful mind always prefers the unworthy.

Miss DORRILLON.

Ah ! Mr. Mandred, are you there ? [*playfully*] And have you undertaken to be sir George's counsel ? If you have, I believe he must lose his cause. To fit you for the tender task of advocate in love, —have you ever been admitted an honourable member of that court ? Have you, with all that solemn wisdom of which you are master, studied Ovid, as our great lawyers study Blackstone ? If you have—shew cause——why plaintiff has a right to defendant's heart.

Sir WILLIAM.

A man of fortune, of family, and of character, ought at least to be treated with respect, and with honour.

Miss DORRILLON.

You mean to say, " That if *A* is beloved by *B*, " why should not *A* be constrained to return *B*'s " love ? " Counsellor for defendant—" Because, " moreover, and besides *B* who has a claim on " defendant's heart, there are also *C*, *D*, *E*, *F*, and " *G* ; all of whom put in their separate claims— " and what, in this case, can poor *A* do ? She is " willing to part and divide her love, share and " share alike ; but *B* will have all or none : so poor " *A* must remain *A* by herself *A*."

Sir GEORGE.

Do you think I would accept a share of your heart ?

Miss DORRILLON.

Do you think I could afford to give it you all?
 “ Besides,” says defendant’s counsellor, “ I will
 “ prove that plaintiff *B* has no heart to give de-
 “ fendant in return—he has, indeed, a pulsation on
 “ the left side ; but as it never beat with any thing
 “ but suspicion and jealousy ; in the laws of love,
 “ it is not termed, admitted, or considered a
 “ heart.” [Going.

Sir GEORGE.

Where are you going?

Miss DORRILLON.

To the music-room, to be sure : and if you follow
 me, it shall be to see me treat every person there
 better than yourself—and Mr. Bronzely, whom you
 hate, to see me treat him best of all. [Exit.

Sir GEORGE.

I must follow you, though to death. [Exit.

Sir WILLIAM.

Fool ! And yet am not I nearly as weak as he is ?
 Else why do I linger in this house ? Why feed my
 hopes with some propitious moment to waken her
 to repentance ? Why still anxiously wish to ward
 off some dreaded fate ?—If she would marry Sir
 George, now—if she would give me only *one* proof
 of discretion, I think I would endeavour to take
 her to my heart.

Enter Mr. BRONZELY, in great haste.

BRONZELY.

My dear Sir, will you do me the greatest favour
 in the world ?—you must do it in an instant too.
 Do, my dear Sir, ask no questions ; but lend me your
 coat for a single moment, and take mine—only for
 a moment—I cannot explain my reasons now, my
 impatience is so great ;—but, the instant you have
 complied,

complied, I will inform you of the whole secret; and you will for ever rejoice that you granted my request. *[Pulling off his coat.]*

Sir WILLIAM [aside, with great scorn.]

And this very contemptible fellow is the favoured lover of my daughter!—I'll—*[after a struggle]*—yes—I'll make myself master of his secret—it may possibly concern her—my child—my child's safety may depend upon it.

BRONZELY.

Dear Mr. Mandred, no time is to be lost!

Sir WILLIAM.

This is rather a strange request, Mr. Bronzely. However, your fervency convinces me you must have some very forcible reason.—There's my coat, Sir. *[Gives it him.]*

BRONZELY.

Thank you, dear Sir, a thousand times.—This goodness I shall for ever remember—this binds me to you for ever!—*[putting it on.]* Thank you, Sir, a thousand times! *[Bowing, dressed, and composed.]*

[Sir WILLIAM [after putting on the other coat.]

And now, Sir, explain the cause of this metamorphosis—let me have the satisfaction to know what advantage will accrue from it; and in what I have to rejoice.

BRONZELY.

Will you promise me not to reveal the secret, if I trust you with it?

Sir WILLIAM.

Would you add conditions after the bargain is made? I must know your secret instantly. *[Threatening.]*

BRONZELY.

Then I will disclose it to you voluntarily; and rely on your honour to keep it.

Sir

Sir WILLIAM [*attentively.*]

Well, Sir.

BRONZELY.

Hark! I thought I heard somebody coming!

[*Offers to go.*]

Sir WILLIAM.

I insist upon the information. [*Laying hold of him.*]

BRONZELY.

Well, then, Sir—well—you shall—you shall.—Then, Sir ——— in the small gallery, which separates the music-room from the rest of these apartments—in that little gallery, the lamp is just, unfortunately, gone out.—I was (as unfortunately) coming along, when the whisking of a woman's gown made me give a sudden start!—I found a person was in the gallery with me, and in the dark.

Sir WILLIAM.

Well, Sir!

BRONZELY.

And so, confidently assuring myself, that it was Miss Dorrillon's waiting-maid, or Lady Mary's waiting-maid, I most unluckily clasped my arms around her, and took one kiss.

Sir WILLIAM.

Only one?

BRONZELY.

There might be half a dozen! I won't pretend to swear to one. We'll say half a dozen, before I knew who she was. My rapidity would not let her breathe at first, and she was fairly speechless.—But the moment she recovered her breath, she cry'd, "Villain! whoever you are, you shall repent this!"—and I found it was the voice of a lady to whom I had just been introduced in the concert-room, one Lady Priory! It seems, she was stealing to bed at the time we unhappily met.

Sir

Sir WILLIAM.

But what has this to do with your coat?

BRONZELY.

A great deal, Sir — you will find, a great deal.— As I perceived she did not know me, I carefully held my tongue—but she, with her prudish notions, called “Help!” and “murder!” On which, I flew to the door, to get away before the lights could be brought — she flew after me; and, as I went out, exclaimed—“Don’t hope to conceal yourself; I shall know you among the whole concert-room; for I carry scissors hanging at my side, and I have cut a piece off your coat.”—[*Sir William looks hastily at his coat—on which Bronzely holds up the part cut.*]—And, sure enough, so she had!

Sir WILLIAM [*in anger.*]

And what, Sir, am I to have the disgrace—

BRONZELY.

Either you or I must.

Sir WILLIAM.

And do you dare—

BRONZELY.

Consider, my dear Sir, how much less the fault is, if perpetrated by you, than by me! This is the first offence of the kind which, I dare say, you have committed this many a year; and it will be overlooked in *you*. But I have been suspected of two or three things of the same sort within a very short time; and I should never be forgiven.

Sir WILLIAM.

Nor ought you to be forgiven—it would be scandalous in me to connive—

BRONZELY.

But would it not be more scandalous to reveal the secret of a person who confided in you?—who
flew

flew to you in distress, as his friend, the partner of his cares?

Sir WILLIAM.

Your impertinence to me, but more your offence to a woman of virtue, deserves punishment. Yet I think the punishment of death, in the way that a man of my Lord Priory's temper might inflict it, much too honourable for your deserts; so I save your life for some less creditable end. I lend you my coat, to disgrace you by existence; and will go to my chamber, and put on another myself. [*Passes Bronzely, in order to retire to his chamber.*]

Enter Lord PRIORY, who meets him. Sir William starts.

BRONZELY [going up to Lord Priory.

Ah, my Lord! is the concert over? charming music! that *solo* was divine.

[*Sir William steals to a chair, and sits down to hide his coat.*]

Lord PRIORY [after looking inquisitively at Bronzely's dress.]

It is time the concert should be over—it had been better it had never begun; for there have been some very improper persons admitted. [*In great anger.*]

BRONZELY [affecting surprise.]

Indeed!

Lord PRIORY [trembling with rage.]

I am at a loss how to act. [*Draws a chair with violence, and places himself down by Sir William—Sir William appears disconcerted and uneasy.*] But if I could find the man to whom this piece of cloth belongs—

BRONZELY.

What! this small piece of woollen cloth?

Lord PRIORY.

Yes, then I should know how to act. In the mean time, Mr. Mandred, as I know you are a great admirer of my wife [Sir William *starts*], and a grave prudent man of honour, I come to ask your advice, how I am the most likely to find out the villain who has dared to insult her; for a gross insult she has received from one of Mr. Norberry's visitors, wearing a coat of which this is a part.

BRONZELY.

The villain, no doubt, stole out of the house immediately.

Lord PRIORY.

I ordered the street door to be guarded that instant—and you, Mr. Bronzely, are now the last man whose habit I have examined.

BRONZELY.

And you see I am perfectly whole. [*Turning round.*

Lord PRIORY.

I do see—I do see. [*Sir William moves about on his chair, and appears greatly embarrassed. Lord Priory starts up in a violent passion—Sir William starts up with him.*]

Lord PRIORY.

I'll find him out if he is on earth—I'll find him out if ——— My passion carries me away—I have not coolness to detect him myself—I'll employ another—I'll send Oliver in search. Oliver! [*calling*] Oliver! here, Oliver! Why don't you answer when you are called, you stupid, dull, idle, forgetful, blundering, obstinate, careless, self-sufficient—— [*Exit in a fury.*

Sir WILLIAM [*rising with great dignity.*]

And now, Mr. Bronzely, how do you think you are to repay me, for having felt one transitory
F moment.

moment of shame? Understand, Sir, that shame is one of the misfortunes to which I have never——

Enter Lady MARY.

BRONZELY [*aside to Sir William.*]

Sit down, sit down, sit down—hold your tongue, and sit down.

[*Sir William reluctantly retires to his chair.*]

Lady MARY.

Well, I do most cordially rejoice, when peevish, suspicious, and censorious people, meet with humiliation! I could die with laughing at the incident which has put both my Lord and my Lady Priory into the greatest terror, grief, and rage.

Sir WILLIAM [rising.]

I am out of all patience. The malicious depravity of persons in a certain sphere of life is not to be borne. [*With firmness and solemnity.*] Lady Mary—Mr. Bronzely——

BRONZELY [*in a half whisper to him.*]

Go away—don't expose yourself—steal out of the room—take my advice, and go to-bed—hide yourself. So great is my respect for you, I would not have you detected for the world.

Sir WILLIAM.

I am going to retire, Sir. I would not throw my friend's house into confusion and broils; therefore I am as well pleased not to be detected as you can be. [*Goes to the door, then turns.*] But before I quit the room, I am irresistibly impelled to say——Mr. Bronzely! Lady Mary! while you continue to ridicule all that is virtuous, estimable, dignified, your vices most assuredly will plunge you into that very disgrace——

[*Enter OLIVER, and places the piece of cloth against Sir William's coat.*]

OLIVER.

OLIVER.

'Tis as exact a match as ever was—it fits to a thread. Ha, ha, ha!—Ha, ha, ha!

Sir WILLIAM.

Rascal!

BRONZELY.

Did not I entreat you to go to-bed?

Lady MARY.

Oh! this is the highest gratification I ever knew. My Lord! my Lord! [*calling.*]

BRONZELY.

Hush, hush!—hold, for heaven's sake.

OLIVER.

But mercy and goodness defend us! who would have thought of this grave gnetleman? Ha, ha, ha! —I can tell you what, Sir; my Lord will be in a terrible passion with you. This house won't hold you both; and I am sure I hate to make mischief. —Mum—I'll say nothing about it. [*clapping Sir William on the shoulder*] And so make yourself easy.

BRONZELY [*on the other side of Sir William.*]

Yes, make yourself easy.

OLIVER.

A good servant should sometimes be a peace-maker—for my part, I have faults of my own, and so, I dare say, has that gentleman—and so, I dare say, has that gentlewoman. But of all the birds in the wood, how came you to make up to my Lady? Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha!

BRONZELY.

No jests—no jests. Mr. Mandred is my friend—my very good friend—and he is not so much to blame as you think, for—Good night, my dear Sir. Heaven bless you. I thank you a thou-

land times. Good night. [*Shaking hands with Sir William, and leading him towards the door.*]

Sir WILLIAM [*with steady composure.*]

Good night. Good night, Lady Mary. [*Exit.*]

OLIVER.

Why, he never so much as once said he was obliged to me.

Lady MARY.

I am sure, if you do not discover this to your master, I will.

OLIVER.

Oh! as that old gentleman had not manners to say "thank you for your kindness," I'll go tell my Lord directly. [*Exit.*]

BRONZELY [*running after him.*]

No, no, no—stop, Oliver. He is gone!

Lady MARY.

What makes you thus anxious and concerned, Bronzely? Now, I wish I may suffer death, if, till I came into this room, I did not think *you* were the offender.

BRONZELY.

I! I indeed!—No, if I could have been tempted to offend any woman in this house in a similar manner, it could have been none but you. [*Bowing.*]

Lady MARY.

No, Bronzely, no; I have been too partial to you, to have any remaining claims — Hark! don't I hear Lord Priory's voice in a dreadful rage?

BRONZELY.

Then Oliver has accused him. What shall I do to prevent mischief? Dear Lady Mary, as it is not proper for me to stay here any longer uninvited, do you run and try to pacify my Lord Priory. Tell him

him Mandred does not sleep here to-night; and in the morning you are sure he will make an apology.

Lady MARY.

I will do as you desire—but I know Mr. Mandred so well, that I am sure he will *not*. [*Exit.*

BRONZELY.

Then I will for him. Early in the morning, I'll wait on Lady Priory, and beg pardon in his name without his knowing it. Yes, I have got poor Mandred into a difficulty, and it is my duty to get him out of it. And then, I shall not only serve him, but have one interview more with that heavenly woman. [*Exit.*

A C T III.

SCENE I. *An Apartment at Mr. NORBERRY'S.**Enter Mr. BRONZELY, followed by a Servant.*BRONZELY [*looking at his watch.*]

I AM early, I know : but Lady Priory is the only person I wish to see. Is my Lord with her ?

SERVANT.

No, sir, Lord Priory sat up very late, and is in bed yet.

BRONZELY.

Acquaint Lady Priory, a person who comes on urgent business, begs to speak with her. If she asks my name, you know it. [*Exit Servant.*] Pray heaven she may bless me with her sight ! Never was so enchanted by a woman in my life ! and never was played such a trick in my life. I am half inflamed by love, and half by spite, once more to attempt her.

*Enter Lady PRIORY—he bows most respectfully—
she curtsies.*

BRONZELY.

Lady Priory, I come—I come upon rather an awkward, yet a very serious business : it was my misfortune to be among that company yesterday evening, where an unworthy member of it had the insolence to offer an affront to your resplendent virtue ———

Lady PRIORY.

—I have some household accounts to arrange, and
break-

breakfast to make for my Lord as soon as he leaves his chamber: therefore, if you please, Sir, proceed to the business on which you came, without thinking it necessary to interrupt it by any compliment to me.

BRONZELY.

I will be concise, Madam.—In a word, I wait upon you from Mr. Mandred, with the most humble apology for his late conduct, which he acknowledges to have been indecorous and unwarrantable: but he trusts, that in consequence of the concession which I now make for him, the whole matter will, from this hour, be buried in oblivion.

Lady PRIORY [*going to the side of the scene, and speaking.*]

If my Lord is at leisure, tell him here is a gentleman would be glad to speak with him.—[*To Bronzely.* I am sorry, Sir, you should know so little of the rules of our family, as to suppose that I could give an answer upon any subject in which my husband condescends to be concerned. [*Going.*

BRONZELY.

Lady Priory, stop. You can at least use your power to soften Lord Priory's resentment; and unless this apology is accepted, a challenge must follow, and possibly *he* may fall.

Lady PRIORY.

Possibly. [*Sighing.*]

BRONZELY.

You are interested for your husband's life?

Lady PRIORY.

Certainly. But I set equal value on his reputation. [*Going.*

BRONZELY.

Hear me one sentence more.—I cannot part from her. [*Aside.*] Oh! I have something of such importance

portance to communicate to you—and yet—I know not how!

Lady PRIORY.

Then tell it to my husband.

BRONZELY.

Hem, hem. *Afide.*] Oh! Lady Priory, if the insult of last night has given you offence, should you not wish to be informed of a plan laid for yet greater violence? [*She starts.*]

Lady PRIORY.

Good heaven!

BRONZELY.

This is neither time nor place to disclose what I wish to say—nor do I know how to find an opportunity to speak with you alone, free from the possibility of intrusion; where I could reveal a *secret* to you, which is connected with your happiness, with your future peace.

Lady PRIORY.

You alarm me beyond expression. I am going to my own house about twelve o'clock, for a couple of hours—follow me there.

BRONZELY.

And I shall be admitted?

Lady PRIORY.

Certainly—for you have excited my curiosity, and I am all impatience to hear what you have to communicate that so much concerns me.

BRONZELY.

Promise then, no person but yourself shall ever know of it. [*She hesitates.*] Unless you promise this, I dare not trust you.

Lady PRIORY [*after a second hesitation.*]

I do promise—I promise faithfully.

BRONZELY.

BRONZELY.

Your word is sacred, I rely.

Lady PRIORY.

Most sacred.

BRONZELY.

And you promise that no one but yourself shall know of the appointment we have now made at your house, nor of the secret which I will then disclose to you.

Lady PRIORY.

I promise faithfully that no one but myself shall ever know of either.

BRONZELY.

Remember then to be there alone, exactly —

Lady PRIORY.

At one o'clock.

BRONZELY.

And that your servants have orders to shew me to you.

Lady PRIORY.

I am too much interested to forget one circumstance.

BRONZELY.

Go now then to Lord Priory with Mandred's apology—and urge his acceptance of it, with all that persuasion by which you are formed to govern, while you appear to obey.

Lady PRIORY.

I will present the apology as I received it from you ; but do not imagine I dare give my opinion upon it, unless I am desired.

BRONZELY.

But if you *are* desired, you will then say —

Lady PRIORY.

Exactly what I think.

[*Exit.*

BRONZELY.

I'll do a meritorious act this very day. This poor woman lives in slavery with her husband. I'll give her an opportunity to run away from him. When we meet, I'll have a post-chaise waiting a few doors from her house; boldly tell her that I love her; and——[*Enter Miss DORRILLON.*]—My dear Miss Dorrillon, I could not sleep all night, but am come thus early on purpose to complain of your treatment of me during the whole of yesterday evening. Not one look did you glance towards me—and there I sat in miserable solitude up in one corner, the whole time of the concert.

Miss DORRILLON.

I protest I did not see you!—and, stranger still! never thought of you.

BRONZELY.

You then like another better than you do me?

Miss DORRILLON.

I do.

BRONZELY.

Do you tell him so?

Miss DORRILLON.

No.

BRONZELY.

You tell him you like me the best.

Miss DORRILLON.

Yes.

BRONZELY.

Then I will believe what you say to him, and not what you say to me.—And though you charge me with inconstancy, yet I swear to you, my beloved Maria, [*taking her hand*] that no woman, no woman but yourself ———

Enter

Enter Sir WILLIAM, and starts at seeing his Daughter in such close conversation with Bronzely.

Sir WILLIAM [*aside.*]

How familiar! — my eyes could not be shocked with a sight half so wounding to my heart as this!

BRONZELY [*apart to Miss Dorrillon.*]

Hush! you have heard the story; but don't laugh at him now. He is in a devilish ill humour, and it will all fall on me. Go away.—It's a very good story, but laugh at him another time.

Miss DORRILLON.

I don't believe a word of the story; yet, as a received opinion, it is a charming weapon for an enemy, and I long to use it.

BRONZELY.

Not now, not now—because I have some business with him, and 'twill put him out of temper. [*He hands her to the door.*] [*Exit Miss Dorrillon.*]

Sir WILLIAM [*looking stedfastly after her.*]

Poor girl! poor girl! I am not yet sufficiently enraged against her, not to compassionate her for her choice!—Is this the man who is to be, for life, her companion, her protector?

BRONZELY.

Well, Mr. Mandred, I believe I have settled it.

Sir WILLIAM.

Settled what? [*anxiously.*]

BRONZELY.

At least I have done all in my power to serve you: perhaps you don't know that Mr. Oliver divulged the whole affair. But I have waited on my Lady Priory, and I do believe I have settled it with her, to manage it so with my Lord, that every thing shall be hushed up. You may expect a few jests among

your female acquaintance, and a few epigrams in the news-papers ; but I verily believe every thing material is safe.—Is there any farther satisfaction which you demand from me ?

Sir WILLIAM.

Not at present—a man is easily satisfied who possesses both courage and strength to do himself right, whenever he feels his wrongs oppressive. I have as yet found but little inconvenience from the liberties you have taken with me ; and what, just at this time, far more engages my attention than revenge, is, an application to you for intelligence. Without farther preface, do you pay your addresses to the young lady who lives in this house ?

BRONZELY.

Yes I do, Sir—I do.

Sir WILLIAM.

You know, I suppose, which of the two ladies I mean ?

BRONZELY.

Which ever you mean, Sir, 'tis all the same ; for I pay my addresses to them both.

Sir WILLIAM - [starting.]

To them both !

BRONZELY.

I always do.

Sir WILLIAM.

And pray, which of them do you love ?

BRONZELY.

Both, Sir—upon my word, both—I assure you, both.

Sir WILLIAM.

But you don't intend to marry both ?

BRONZELY.

I don't intend to marry either : and indeed, the woman whom I love best in the world, has a husband

band already. Do you suppose I could confine my affections to Lady Mary or Miss Dorrillon, after Lady Priory appeared? do you suppose I did not know who it was I met last night in the dark? wherever I visit, Mr. Mandred, I always make love to every woman in the house: and I assure you they all expect it—I assure you, Sir, they all expect it.

[*Sir William walks about in anger.*]

BRONZELY.

Have you any further commands for me?

Sir WILLIAM.

Yes, one word more.—And you really have no regard for this girl who parted from you as I came in?

BRONZELY.

Oh yes, pardon me—I admire, I adore, I love her to distraction: and if I had not been so long acquainted with my Lady Mary, nor had seen my Lady Priory last night, I should certainly call Sir George Evelyn to an account for being so perpetually with her.

Sir WILLIAM [*anxiously.*]

Do you think *he* loves her?

BRONZELY.

Yes, I dare say, as well as I do.

Sir WILLIAM.

Do you think *she* likes him?

BRONZELY.

I think *she* likes *me*.

Sir WILLIAM.

But, with your method of affection, *she* may like him too.

BRONZELY.

She may, *she* may.—In short, there is no answering for what *she* likes — all whim and flightiness — acquainted with every body — coquetting with every

every body — and in debt with every body. Her mind distracted between the claims of lovers, and the claims of creditors,—the anger of Mr. Norberry, and the want of intelligence from her father !

Sir WILLIAM.

She is in a hopeful way.

BRONZELY.

Oh, it would be impossible to think of marrying her in her present state—for my part, I can't—and I question whether Sir George would.—But if her father come home, and give her the fortune that was once expected, why then I may possibly marry her myself.

Sir WILLIAM [*firmly.*]

She will never have any fortune — I came from India lately, you know ; and you may take my word her father is not coming over, nor will he ever come.

BRONZELY.

Are you sure of that ?

Sir WILLIAM.

Very sure.

BRONZELY.

Then keep it a secret — don't tell her so — poor thing ! it would break her heart. She is doatingly fond of her father.

Sir WILLIAM.

Hah ! how ! — oh no, she can have no remembrance of him.

BRONZELY.

Not of his person, perhaps : but he has constantly corresponded with her ; sent her presents, and affectionate letters—and you know a woman's heart is easily impressed.

Sir WILLIAM.

I never heard her mention her father.

BRONZELY.

BRONZELY.

Not to you—but to us who are kind to her, she talks of him continually. She cried bitterly the other day when the last ship came in, and there was no account of him.

Sir WILLIAM.

Did she? did she? *eagerly.*] Aye, I suppose she is alarmed lest he should be dead, and all his fortune lost.

BRONZELY.

No, I believe her affection for *him* is totally unconnected with any interested views. I have watched her upon that head, and I believe she loves her father sincerely.

Sir WILLIAM [*wiping a tear from his eye.*]
I believe it does not matter whom she loves!

BRONZELY.

By the bye, she hates *you*.

Sir WILLIAM.

I thought so.

BRONZELY.

Yes, you may be satisfied of that. Yes, she even quarrelled with me the other day for speaking in your favour: you had put her in a passion, and she said “no one that loved her, ought to have any respect for you.”

Sir WILLIAM.

I am much obliged to her—very much obliged to her. Did she say nothing more?

BRONZELY.

Only “that you were ill-natured, dogmatic, cruel, and insolent.” Nothing more. — And say what she will against you, you know you can be even with her.

Sir WILLIAM.

Yes, I *can* be even with her, and I *will* be even with her.

Enter Lord PRIORY, and takes Bronzely on one side.

Lord PRIORY.

I have accepted this man's apology:—I will not call him to a serious account; but he shall not escape every kind of resentment.—I am resolved to laugh at him; to turn the whole affair into mirth and good humour; at the same time to gall him to the heart. Good morning, Mr. Mandred: how do you do this morning, Mr. Mandred?—Let me go, [*violently to Bronzely*] I must joke with him.

BRONZELY.

But neither your voice nor your looks agree with your words.

Lord PRIORY.

Mr. Mandred, I did intend to be angry—but it would give too respectable an air to a base action—and so I am come to laugh at you. [*Enter Lady MARY.*] And I am sure, you, Lady Mary, will join even me, in laughing at this man of gallantry.

Lady MARY.

Oh, I am absolutely afraid to come near the Tarquin!

Sir WILLIAM.

You need *not*, Lady Mary; for there can be no Tarquin without a Lucretia.

Lord PRIORY.

However, Mr. Mandred, it is proper I should tell you, I accept the apology you have made: but at the same time——

Sir WILLIAM [*hastily.*]

What do you mean, my Lord? I have made no apology.

BRONZELY.

BRONZELY.

Yes, yes, you have — I called and made one for you.

Sir WILLIAM.

Made an apology for me! You have just gone one step too far then; and I insist —

BRONZELY [*Drawing Sir William on one side.*]

I will—I will—I will set every thing to rights. It would be base in me if I did not; and I will. [*Turns to Lord Priory and Lady Mary.*] Yes, Mr. Mandred, I will retrieve *your* character at the expence of my *own*. I am more able to contend with the frenzy of a jealous husband than you are.—[*Enter Miss DORRILLON and Sir GEORGE EVELYN.*]
I am happy to see you—you are just come in time to hear me clear the grave, the respectable character of my friend Mr. Mandred, and to stigmatise my own.—My Lord, vent all your anger and your satire upon me. It was I (pray believe me, I beg you will; don't doubt my word), it was I who committed the offence of which my friend, the man I respect and reverence, stands accused—It was I who offended my Lady Priory, and then —

Lord PRIORY.

It can't be—I won't believe you.

Lady MARY.

But how generous and noble in him to take it upon himself!

BRONZELY [*to Sir William.*]

There! what can I do more? You see they won't believe me!—Tell me what I can do more? Can I do any thing more?—My feelings are wounded on your account, more than on my own, and compel me, though reluctantly, to quit the room.

[*Exit.*]

H

Sir

Sir GEORGE.

I am at a loss which to admire most, the warmth of Mr. Bronzely's friendship, or the coldness of Mr. Mandred's gratitude!

Lady MARY.

Oh! if it were not for that happy steadiness of feature, he could not preach rectitude of conduct as he does.

Lord PRIORY [*going up to Sir William.*]
Eloquent admonisher of youth!

Miss DORRILLON [*going to him.*]

Indeed, my rigid monitor, I cannot but express admiration, that, under those austere looks, and that fullen brow, there still should lurk ——

Sir WILLIAM.

Have a care—don't proceed—stop where you are—dare not *you* complete a sentence that is meant to mock me.—I have borne the impertinence of this whole company with patience, with contempt; but dare *you* to breathe an accent suspicious of my conduct, and I will instantly teach you how to respect *me*, and to shrink with horror from yourself.

[*She stands motionless in surprise.*]

Lord PRIORY.

What a passion he is in! Compose yourself, Mr. Mandred.

Miss DORRILLON.

I protest, Mr. Mandred ——

Sir WILLIAM.

Silence. [*Raising his voice.*] Dare not to address yourself to me.

Lady MARY.

Did you ever hear the like?—And I vow she looks awed by him!

Lord

Lord PRIORY.

How strange, that a man can't command his temper!

Sir GEORGE.

Mr. Mandred, permit me to say, I have ever wished to treat you with respect—nor would I be rash in laying that wish aside.—Yet, I must now take upon me to assure you, that if you think to offend *every* lady in this house with impunity, you are mistaken.

Sir WILLIAM.

Sir George, if you mean to frighten me by your threats, I laugh at you—but if your warmth is really kindled, and by an attachment to that unworthy object, [*pointing to Miss Dorrillon*] I only pity you.

Sir GEORGE.

Insufferable!—[*going up to him.*]—Instantly make an atonement for what you have said, or expect the consequence!

Sir WILLIAM.

And pray, Sir George, what atonement does your justice demand?

Sir GEORGE.

Retract your words—Acknowledge you were grossly deceived, when you said Miss Dorrillon was unworthy.

Sir WILLIAM.

Retract my words!

Sir GEORGE.

Were they not unjust?—Is it a reproach, that, enveloped in the maze of fashionable life, she has yet preserved her virtue unsuspected? That, encumbered with the expences consequent to her connections, she has proudly disdained even from me the honourable offer of pecuniary aid? that her fond hope still fixes on the return of an absent pa-

rent, whose blessing she impatiently expects? and that I should have watched her whole conduct with an eye of scrutinizing jealousy, and yet have only beheld that which makes me aspire, as the summit of earthly happiness, to become her husband?

Sir WILLIAM.

Young man, I admire your warmth [*with great fervour and affection.*] There is much compassion, and benevolence, and charity, in sometimes mistaking the vicious for the virtuous; — and if in the heat of contention I have said a word reflecting on *your* character, I am ready to avow my error; and before this company to beg your pardon.

Sir GEORGE.

That is not enough, Sir—[*taking Miss Dorrillon by the hand, and leading her forward*]—you must ask this lady's pardon.

[*Sir William starts, and turns his face away, strongly impressed.*]

Sir WILLIAM.

Ask *her* pardon! Though I forgive some insults, I will not this.—Ask *her* pardon?—

Miss DORRILLON.

Nay, nay, Sir George, you have no business with Mr. Mandred's quarrels and mine—Reserve your heroic courage for some nobler purpose than a poor woman's reputation.

Sir GEORGE.

Point out a nobler, and I'll give up this.

Lady MARY.

There is none so noble! And I wish, Sir George, you would undertake to vindicate mine.

Lord PRIORY.

Come, Lady Mary, let us retire, and leave these two irritable men to themselves,

Lady

Lady MARY.

Come, Maria, let us leave them alone. He'll teach Mr. Mandred to be civil for the future.

Miss DORRILLON [in great agitation.]

Dear madam, I would not leave them alone for the world!

Lady MARY.

Then, my Lord, you and I will; they have no offensive weapons; so we may venture to leave them.

Lord PRIORY.

This comes of being too warm in conversation!
This comes of being in a passion!

[Exeunt Lord Priory and Lady Mary.]

Sir GEORGE.

While there is a female present, I have only to say — good morning, Mr. Mandred. *[Going.]*

Miss DORRILLON [catching hold of him.]

For once I give up my pride to soften yours. Come, do not look thus determined! — I am sure Mr. Mandred did not mean to offend me; the words he made use of fell from his lips by accident.

Sir WILLIAM.

They did not — I meant them — I mean them still — and I repeat them.

Miss DORRILLON [to Sir William.]

Now, how can you be so provoking? — Nay, hold, Sir George, *[he offers to go]* you shall not go away with that frowning brow. *[She draws him gently towards Sir William, then takes Sir William's hand.]* Nor you, with yours. — Come, shake hands for my sake. — Now, as I live, Sir George, Mr. Mandred's hand feels warmer and kinder than yours — he tries to draw it back, but he has not the heart. *[Sir William snatches it away as by compulsion.]* — Thou art a strange personage! — thou wilt not suffer me either to praise or to dispraise thee. — Come,
Sir

Sir George, make up this difference—for if you were to fight, and Mr. Mandred was to fall ——

Sir WILLIAM.

What then?

Miss DORRILLON.

Why, “I could better spare a better man.”

Sir WILLIAM.

How!

Miss DORRILLON.

I see you are both sullen, both obstinate, and I have but one resource.—Sir George, if you aspire to my hand, dare not to lift yours against Mr. Mandred. He and I profess to be enemies; but if I may judge of his feelings by my own, we have but passing enmities.—I bear him no malice, nor he me, I dare be sworn. Therefore, Sir, lift but your arm against him, or insult him with another word, and our intercourse is for ever at an end. [Exit.

[Sir George and Sir William stand for some time silent.]

Sir GEORGE.

Why is it in the power of one woman to make two men look ridiculously?

Sir WILLIAM.

I am at a loss to know, Sir, whether you and I part friends or enemies.—However, call on me in the way you best like, and you will find me ready to meet you either as an enemy, or as a friend.

[Exeunt separately.]

A C T IV.

SCENE I. *A Hall at Lord Priory's.*

Two Servants discovered sitting—Another enters.

First SERVANT.

DO you hear, Mr. Porter, you are to admit no person but Mr. Bronzely.

Second SERVANT.

Mr. Bronzely—very well—[*a loud rapping*]*—and there I suppose he is.*

First SERVANT, looking through the window.

Yes; that I believe is his carriage.—[*to Third Servant*]*—Let my Lady know. [Exit Third Servant.*

Enter BRONZELY.

BRONZELY.

You are sure Lady Priory is at home?

First SERVANT.

Yes, Sir, and gave order to admit nobody but you.

BRONZELY.

Has she been some time at home?

First SERVANT.

Yes, Sir; I dare say my Lady came from Mr. Norberry's half an hour ago.

BRONZELY.

Waiting for me half an hour—[*aside*]*—Shew me to her instantly. [Exit, following the Servant hastily.*

SCENE

SCENE II. *An Apartment at Lord Priory's.**Enter BRONZELY and Lady PRIORY on opposite sides.*

BRONZELY.

My dear Lady Priory, how kind you are not to have forgotten your promise.

Lady PRIORY.

How was it possible I should? I have been so anxious for the intelligence you have to communicate, that it was pain to wait till the time arrived.

BRONZELY.

Thus invited, encouraged to speak, I will speak boldly—and I call heaven to witness, that what I am going to say——

Lady PRIORY.

No, stay a moment longer—don't tell me just yet—[*listening towards the side of the scenes*—for I wish him to hear the very beginning.

BRONZELY.

Who, hear the very beginning?

Enter Lord PRIORY.—BRONZELY starts.

Lord PRIORY.

I have not kept you waiting, I hope. My lawyer stopt me on business, or I should have been here sooner.—My dear Mr. Bronzely—[*going up to him*]
—I thank you a thousand times for the interest you take in my concerns; and I come prepared with proper coolness and composure to hear the secret with which you are going to entrust us.

BRONZELY.

The secret!—yes, Sir—The secret which I was going to disclose to my Lady Priory—Ha, ha, ha!—But, my Lord, I am afraid it is of too frivolous a nature for your attention.

Lord PRIORY.

I account nothing frivolous which concerns my wife.

BRONZELY.

Certainly, my Lord, certainly not.

Lord PRIORY.

Besides, she told me it was of the utmost importance. Did not you? [*angrily.*]

Lady PRIORY.

He said so.

BRONZELY.

And so it was—it was of importance *then*—just at the very time I was first speaking to Lady Priory on the subject.

Lady PRIORY.

You said so but this very moment.

Lord PRIORY.

Come, come, tell it immediately, whatever it is. Come, let us hear it.—[*after waiting some time*] Why, Sir, you look as if you were ashamed of it! What can be the meaning of this?

BRONZELY.

To be plain, my Lord, my secret will disclose the folly of a person for whom I have a sincere regard.

Lord PRIORY.

No matter—let every fool look like a fool, and every villain be known for what he is—Tell your story.

Lady PRIORY.

How can you deprive me of the pleasure you promised? You said it would prevent every future care.

Lord PRIORY.

Explain, Sir. I begin to feel myself not quite so composed as I expected. You never, perhaps, saw

I

me

me in a passion—she has—and if you were once to see me really angry——

BRONZELY.

Then, my Lord, I am apt to be passionate too—and I boldly tell you, that what I had to reveal, though perfectly proper, was meant for Lady Priory alone to hear. I entreated your Ladyship not to mention to my Lord that I had any thing to communicate, and you gave me a solemn promise you would *not*.

Lady PRIORY.

Upon my honour, during our whole conversation upon that subject, you never named my Lord Priory's name.

BRONZELY.

I charged you to keep what I had to tell you a profound secret.

Lady PRIORY.

Yes; but I thought you understood I could have no secrets from my husband.

BRONZELY.

You promised no one should know it but yourself.

Lady PRIORY.

He is *myself*.

Lord PRIORY.

How, Mr. Bronzely, did you suppose she and I were two? Perhaps you did, and that we wanted a third. Well, I quite forgive you for your silly mistake, and laugh at you, ha, ha, ha, as I did at Mr. Mandred.—[*seriously*—Did you suppose, Sir, we lived like persons of fashion of the modern time? Did you imagine that a woman of her character could have a wish, a desire, even a thought, a secret from her husband?

BRONZELY.

It is amazing to find so much fidelity the reward of tyranny!

Lady

Lady PRIORY.

Sir—I speak with humility—I would not wish to give offence—[*timidly*].—But, to the best of my observation and understanding, your sex, in respect to us, are *all tyrants*. I was born to be the slave of some of you—I make the choice to obey my husband.

Lord PRIORY.

Yes, Mr. Bronzely; and I believe it is more for her happiness to be my slave, than your friend—to live in fear of me, than in love with you.—*Lady* Priory, leave the room. [*Exit Lady Priory.*]

Lord PRIORY.

Do you see—did you observe the glow of truth and candour which testifies that woman's faith? and do you not blush at having attempted it? Call me a tyrant! Where are the signs? Oh, if every married man would follow my system in the management of his wife, every impertinent lover would look just as foolish as you!

BRONZELY.

This is all boasting, my Lord—you live in continual fear—for (without meaning any offence to *Lady Priory's* honour) you know you dare not trust her for one hour alone with any man under sixty.

Lord PRIORY.

I dare trust her at any time with a coxcomb.

BRONZELY.

That is declaring I am not one—for I am certain you dare not trust her alone with me.

Lord PRIORY [*in a passion.*]

Yes, with fifty such.

BRONZELY.

But not with one—and you are right—it might be dangerous.

Lord PRIORY [*angrily.*]

No, it would not.

BRONZELY [*significantly.*]

Yes, it would.

Lord PRIORY.

Have not you had a trial?

BRONZELY.

But you were present. You constantly follow all her steps, watch all she says and does. But I believe you are right—wives are not to be trusted.

Lord PRIORY.

Mine is.

BRONZELY.

No, my dear Lord Priory, you must first become gentle, before you can positively confide in her affection—before you can trust her in a house, or in any place, alone.

Lord PRIORY [*hastily.*]

To prove you are mistaken, I'll instantly go back to my friend Norberry's, and leave you here to tell her the secret you boasted. Pay your addresses to her, if that is the secret—you have my free consent.

BRONZELY.

My dear friend, I'll accept it.

Lord PRIORY.

Ay, I see you have hopes of supplanting me, by calling me your friend.—But can you conceive now that she'll listen to you?

BRONZELY.

You have given me leave to try, and can't recall it.

Lord PRIORY.

But depend upon it, you will meet with some terrible humiliation.

BRONZELY.

BRONZELY.

Either you or I shall.

Lord PRIORY.

I shall laugh to hear you tumbled down stairs,

BRONZELY.

You are not to remain on the watch here; you are to return to Mr. Norberry's.

Lord PRIORY.

Was that the bargain?

BRONZELY.

Don't you remember? You said so.

Lord PRIORY.

Well, if that will give you any satisfaction —

BRONZELY.

— It will give me great satisfaction.

Lord PRIORY.

Heaven forgive me, but your confidence makes me laugh. Ha, ha, ha!

BRONZELY.

And yours makes me laugh. Ha, ha, ha!

Enter OLIVER.

Lord PRIORY.

Hah! What brings you here, Oliver? Lady Priory and I are only come home for a few hours.

OLIVER.

I know it, my Lord. I thought nevertheless I might be wanted.

BRONZELY.

And so you are, good Mr. Oliver. Your Lord desires you to conduct me to your Lady in the next room, and acquaint her it is with his permission I am come to conclude the conversation which was just now interrupted.—Is not that right, my Lord?

Are

Are not those words exactly corresponding with your kind promise?

Lord PRIORY.

I believe they are.

OLIVER.

— I am “to take Mr. Bronzely to my lady, and tell her you sent him.” *[Exit Oliver.]*

BRONZELY.

Now this is perfect fashion: and while I step to Lady Priory, do you go and comfort my intended wife, Lady Mary.

Lord PRIORY.

I hate the fashion—and were I not sure you would now be received in a very unfashionable manner ———

BRONZELY.

No rough dealings, I hope?

Lord PRIORY.

Oh, you begin to be afraid, do you?

BRONZELY.

No—but I have met with an accident or two lately—and I am not so well acquainted with ancient usages as to know in what manner a man of my pursuits would have been treated in former times.

Lord PRIORY.

A man of your pursuits, Mr. Bronzely, is of a very late date; and to be shamed out of them by a wife like mine.

BRONZELY.

Then we shall all three be old-fashioned.

[Exit, following Oliver.]

Lord PRIORY *[returning and looking anxiously after Bronzely.]*

I am passionate—I am precipitate—I have no com-

command over my temper.—However, if a man cannot govern himself, yet he will never make any very despicable figure, as long as he knows how to govern his wife. [Exit.]

SCENE III. *Sir WILLIAM's Apartment at Mr. NORBERRY's.*—Several trunks and travelling boxes.—*Sir WILLIAM discovered, packing writings into a port-folio.*

Sir WILLIAM.

And here is the end of my voyage to England!—a voyage, which, for years, my mind has dwelt on with delight!—I pictured to myself my daughter grown to womanhood, beautiful! and so she is.—Accomplished! and so she is.—Virtuous! and so she is.—Am I of a discontented nature then, that I am not satisfied?—Am I too nice?—Perhaps I am.—Soothing thought!—I will for a moment cherish it, and dwell with some little gratitude upon her late anxiety for my safety. [*He walks about in a thoughtful musing manner.*]

A loud thrusting and rapping is heard at his chamber door.

Enter Miss DORRILLON hastily and in affright.

Miss DORRILLON.

Oh Mr. Mandred, I beg your pardon—I did not know this was your apartment. But suffer me to lock the door: [*she locks it*] and conceal me for a moment, for heaven's sake.

Sir WILLIAM.

What's the matter? Why have you locked my door?

Miss DORRILLON [trembling.]

I dare not tell you.

Sir WILLIAM.

I insist upon knowing.

Miss DORRILLON.

Why then—I am pursued by a ——— I cannot name the horrid name ———

NABSON [without.]

She went into this room.

Miss DORRILLON [to Sir William.]

Go to the door, and say I did not.

Sir WILLIAM.

How!

NABSON [without.]

Please to open the door.

Miss DORRILLON.

Threaten to beat him if he won't go away.

Sir WILLIAM.

Give me the key, and let me see from whom you want to hide.—[*commandingly*].—Give me the key.

Miss DORRILLON [collecting firmness.]

I will not.

Sir WILLIAM [starting.]

“Will not”——“Will not,” when I desire you!

Miss DORRILLON.

No—since you refuse me protection, I'll protect myself.

Sir WILLIAM.

But you had better not have made use of that expression to me—you had better not. Recall it by giving me the key.

Miss DORRILLON.

If I do, will you let me conceal myself behind that book-case, and say I am not here?

Sir WILLIAM.

Utter a falsehood?

Miss

Miss DORRILLON.

I would for you. [*A hammering at the door.*]

Sir WILLIAM.

They are breaking open the door.—Give me the key, I command you.

Miss DORRILLON.

“Command me!” “command me!” However, there it is. [*Gives it him.*] And now, if you are a gentleman, give me up if you dare!

Sir WILLIAM.

“If I am a gentleman!” Hem, hem—“If I am a gentleman!” “Dares” me too!

[*Going slowly towards the door.*]

Miss DORRILLON.

Yes. I have now thrown myself upon your protection: and if you deliver me to my enemies——

Sir WILLIAM.

What enemies? What business have you with enemies?

Miss DORRILLON.

’Tis they have business with me.

Sir WILLIAM [*to them without.*]

I am coming. The door shall be opened.

Miss DORRILLON [*follows and lays hold of him.*]

Oh, for heaven’s sake, have pity on me—they are merciless creditors—I shall be dragged to a prison. Do not deliver me up—I am unfortunate—I am overwhelmed with misfortune—have compassion on me!

[*She falls on her knees.*]

Sir WILLIAM [*in great agitation.*]

Don’t kneel to me!—I don’t mean you to kneel to me!—What makes you think of kneeling to me?—I must do my duty.

[*He unlocks the door.*]

K

Enter

Enter NABSON—Miss Dorrillon steals behind the book-case.

Sir WILLIAM.

What did you want, Sir?

NABSON.

A lady, that I have just this minute made my prisoner; but she ran from me, and locked herself in here.

Sir WILLIAM [with surprise.]

Arrested a lady!

NABSON.

Yes, Sir; and if you mean to deny her being here, I must make bold to search the room.

Sir WILLIAM.

Let me look at your credentials.—*[takes the writ.]*
—“Elizabeth Dorrillon for six hundred pounds.”
Pray, Sir, is it customary to have female names on pieces of paper of this denomination?

NABSON.

Oh yes, Sir, very customary. There are as many ladies who will run into tradesmen's books, as there are gentlemen; and when one goes to take the ladies, they are a thousand times more slippery to catch than the men.

Sir WILLIAM.

Abominable!—Well Sir, your present prisoner shall not slip through your hands, if I can prevent it. I scorn to defend a worthless woman, as much as I should glory in preserving a good one: and I give myself joy in being the instrument of your executing justice.—*[He goes and leads Miss Dorrillon from the place where she was concealed—she casts down her head.]*—What! do you droop? Do you tremble? You, who at the ball to-night would have danced lightly, though your poor creditor had been perishing.

rishing with want! You, who never asked yourself if your extravagance might not send an industrious father of a family to prison, can you feel on the prospect of going thither yourself?

Miss DORRILLON.

For what cause am I the object of your perpetual persecution?

NABSON.

Lor! Madam, the gentleman means to bail you after all: I can see it by his looks.

Sir WILLIAM.

How, rascal, dare you suppose, or imagine, or hint, such a thing? [*going up to him in anger.*]

Miss DORRILLON.

That's right, beat him out of the house.

Sir WILLIAM.

No, Madam, he shall not go out of the house without taking you along with him. Punishment may effect in your disposition what indulgence has no hope of producing.—There is your prisoner [*handing her over to him*—and you may take my word, that she will not be released by me, or by any one: and it will be only adding to a debt she can never pay, to take her to any place previous to a prison. [*with the emotion of resentment, yet deep sorrow.*]

NABSON.

Is that true, my Lady?

Miss DORRILLON [*after a pause.*]

Very true. I have but one friend—but one relation in the world—and he is far away. [*Weeps.*]

[*Sir William wipes his eyes.*]

NABSON.

More's the pity.

Sir WILLIAM.

No, Sir, no—no pity at all—for if fewer fine ladies had friends, we should have fewer examples of profligacy. [*She walks to the door, then turns to Sir William.*]

Miss DORRILLON.

I forgive you. [*Exit, followed by Nabson.*]

Sir WILLIAM [*looking after her.*]

And perhaps I *could* forgive you. But I must not. No, this is justice—this is doing my duty—this is strength of mind—this is fortitude—fortitude—fortitude. [*He walks proudly across the room, then stops, takes out his handkerchief, throws his head into it, and is going off.*]

Enter Lady MARY—a man following at a distance.

Lady MARY.

Mr. Mandred, Mr. Mandred. [*He turns.*] Sir—Mr. Mandred—Sir—[*in a supplicating tone*] I presume—I presume, Sir—

Sir WILLIAM.

What, Madam? what?

Lady MARY.

I came, Sir, to request a favour of you.

Sir WILLIAM.

So it should seem, by that novel deportment.

Lady MARY.

If you would for once consider with lenity, the frailty incidental to a woman who lives in the gay world——

Sir WILLIAM.

Well, Madam!

Lady MARY.

—How much she is led away by the temptation of fine cloaths, fine coaches, and fine things.

Sir

Sir WILLIAM.

Come, to the business.

Lady MARY.

You are rich, we all know, though you endeavour to disguise the truth.

Sir WILLIAM.

I can't stay to hear you, if you don't proceed.

Lady MARY.

My request is—save from the dreadful horrors of a jail, a woman who has no friend near her—a woman who may have inadvertently offended you, but who never——

Sir WILLIAM.

'Tis in vain for you to plead on her account—she knows my sentiments upon her conduct—she knows the opinion I have formed of her ; and you cannot prevail on me to change it.

Lady MARY.

Do you suppose I come to plead for Miss Dorrilton ?

Sir WILLIAM.

Certainly.

Lady MARY.

No, I am pleading for myself. I am unfortunately involved in similar circumstances—I have a similar debt to the self-same tradesman, and we are both at present in the self-same predicament.

Sir WILLIAM.

And upon what pretence did you suppose I would be indulgent to you, more than to her ?

Lady MARY.

Because you have always treated me with less severity ; and because I overheard you just now say, you “ should glory in delivering from difficulty a “ good woman.”

Sir WILLIAM.

And so I should.

Lady MARY.

How unlike the world!

Sir WILLIAM.

No—whatever the discontented may please to say, the world is affectionate, is generous, to the good; more especially to the good of the female sex; for it is only an exception to a general rule, when a good woman is in pecuniary distress.

[Exit Sir William.

Enter Lord PRIORY humming a tune, but with a very serious face: he pulls out his watch with evident marks of anxiety—coughs—rubs his forehead—and gives various other marks of discontent and agitation.

Lady Mary observes him with attention, then sidles up to him.

Lady MARY.

By the good humour you appear in, my Lord, I venture to mention to you my distresses. I know the virtues of Lady Priory make my failings conspicuous; but then consider the different modes to which we have been habituated—the excluded from temptation——

Lord PRIORY.

No—she shuns temptation. Has she not in this very house been compelled to make exertions? Has she not detected and exposed both Mr. Mandred and Mr. Bronzely?

Lady MARY.

Bronzely! Bronzely! How! [*Aside.* Another rival?

Lord PRIORY.

She has not done with *him* yet, I believe; for, to tell the truth, he is now with her at my house in Park-street. He taxed me with being jealous of my

my wife—to prove in what contempt I held the accusation, I left them together, and bid him make love to her.

Lady MARY.

Is that possible ?

Lord Priory.

I can't say I would have done so rash an action, had I been married to some woman—to you, for instance—but I have not a doubt of Lady Priory's safety: her mind, I know, is secure, and I have servants in the house to protect her from personal outrage. The only fear is, lest *he* should have received one; for 'tis now near two hours [*looking at his watch*] since I came away, and I have neither seen nor heard any thing of either of them!—But to your Ladyship's concerns.

Lady MARY.

I am at this instant, my Lord, in the power of an implacable creditor; and without a friend who will give bond for a certain sum, I must—I blush to name it—be taken to a prison.

Lord PRIORY.

I am not at all surpris'd at the circumstance, Madam: but it amazes me that you should apply to me for deliverance. You have a brother in town; why not send to him?

Lady MARY.

He was my friend the very last time a distress of this kind befell me.

[*Weeps.*]

Lord PRIORY.

Ask Mr. Norberry.

Lady MARY.

He was my friend the time before.

Lord PRIORY.

Mr. Bronzely, then.

Lady

WIVES AS THEY WERE,

Lady MARY.

And Bronzely the time before that.

*Enter OLIVER.**Lord PRIORY.*

Ah, Oliver! I am glad to see you, my good fellow. Ha! what have you done with Mr. Bronzely?

OLIVER.

Nay, my Lord, that I can't tell. I can't tell what he has done with himself.

Lord PRIORY.

How long has he been gone from my house?

OLIVER.

He is not gone yet as I know of; for none of the servants let him out.

Lord PRIORY.

Not gone! and you can't tell where he is!

OLIVER.

No, that we can't: we have looked in every room for him, and can't find him any where.

Lord PRIORY.

Not find him! [*recollecting himself*] Ho! ho! I thought how it would be—I thought he'd have some trick played him. Where's your Lady?

OLIVER.

That I can't tell neither. We have looked in every room, and can't find *her*.

Lord PRIORY.

How!

OLIVER.

'Tis as sure as I am alive. I and the butler, two footmen, and all the maids, have been looking in parlours, chambers, and garrets, every crick and corner, and no where can we find either Mr. Bronzely

ly or my Lady: but, wherever they are, there's no doubt but they are together. Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha!

Lady MARY.

Ha, ha, ha! No doubt at all, Mr. Oliver.

Lord PRIORY.

Together! together! and not in my house! You tell a falsehood. I'll go myself and find them.

OLIVER.

You must look sharp, then.

Lord PRIORY.

How came you to miss them?

OLIVER.

I chanced to go into the next room, to see if there was a proper fire to get it well aired; I knew I had taken Mr. Bronzely to my Lady in the inner room, and I had heard them both laughing not a quarter of an hour before; but now, all on a sudden, there was neither laughing nor talking, nor any noise at all—every thing was so quiet, you might have heard a pin drop.

Lord PRIORY [anxiously.]

Well!

OLIVER.

And so I thought to myself, thought I, I'll sit down here; for my Lady will be ringing soon: however, there was no ringing for a whole half hour; and so then I thought I would e'en rap at the door; but nobody called "Come in." So then I went in of my own accord; and there I found——

Lord PRIORY.

What?

OLIVER.

Nobody! not a soul to be seen!

Lord PRIORY [affecting indifference.]

Oh! she has been playing Bronzely some trick!

L

She

She has been hiding him ; and in some miserable place !

OLIVER.

But why need she hide herself along with him ?

Enter Mr. NORBERRY.

Mr. NORBERRY.

My dear friend, my dear Lord Priory, let me speak with you alone.—I come upon business that—

Lord PRIORY.

You look pale ! What is your business ? Tell it me at once.

Mr. NORBERRY.

It is of so delicate a nature——

Lord PRIORY.

I know my wife is with Mr. Bronzely—I left them together. I know he is a licentious man ; but I know she is an innocent woman.—Now, what have you to tell me ?

Mr. NORBERRY.

What I have just learnt from one of your servants. About a quarter of an hour after you left them, they stole softly out at the back of your house, ran to a post-chaise and four that was in waiting, and drove off together full speed.

Lord PRIORY.

Gone ! eloped ! run away from me ! left me ! left the tenderest, kindest, most indulgent husband, that ever woman had !

Lady MARY.

That we can all witness.

Lord PRIORY.

I was too fond of her—my affection ruined her—women are ungrateful—I did not exert a husband's authority—I was not strict enough—I humoured

moured and spoiled her!—Bless me! what a thick mist is come over my eyes!

Lady MARY.

No, my Lord, it is clearing away.

Lord PRIORY.

Lead me to my room. [*He is led off by Mr. Norberry, exhausted with grief and anger.*]

Oliver looks after Lord Priory, then takes out his handkerchief, and follows him off, crying.

Lady MARY.

Ha, ha, ha! Oh, how I enjoy this distress! Ha, ha, ha!

The officer who has attended her during the scene, and kept at the farther part of the stage, now comes forward, and bows to her. She starts on seeing him—takes out her handkerchief, and goes crying off at the opposite side.

A C T V.

SCENE I. *An Apartment at Mr. BRONZELY's.**Enter HOUSEKEEPER and FOOTMAN.*

HOUSEKEEPER.

DINNER enough for twelve, and only two to sit down to it! Come home without one preparation—not a bed aired, or the furniture uncovered.

FOOTMAN.

This is not the first time he has done so.

HOUSEKEEPER.

No: but 'tis always thus when a woman's in the case. Well, I do say that my own sex are——

FOOTMAN.

Hush! here they are. Run away. [*Exeunt.*]

Enter Lady PRIORY and Mr. BRONZELY.

Lady PRIORY.

Only twelve miles from London?

BRONZELY.

No more, be assured.

Lady PRIORY.

And you avow that I did not come hither by the commands of my husband, but was deceived into that belief by you.

BRONZELY.

Still it was by his commands your servant introduced me to you; and, upon an errand, which I feared to deliver till I arrived at a house of my own.

Lady

Lady PRIORY.

What is the errand?

BRONZELY.

To tell you that—I love you.

Lady PRIORY.

Do you assert, Lord Priory sent you to me for this?

BRONZELY.

I assert, that, in triumph at your betraying to him our private appointment, he gave me leave to have a second trial. If, then, you have ever harboured one wish to revenge, and forsake a churlish ungrateful partner, never return to him more—but remain with me.

Lady PRIORY.

And what shall I have gained by the exchange, when *you* become churlish, when *you* become ungrateful? My children's shame! the world's contempt! and yours! [*Smiling*] Come, come; you are but jesting, Mr. Bronzely! You would not affront my little share of common sense by making the serious offer of so bad a bargain. Come, own the jest, and take me home immediately.

BRONZELY.

Is it impossible for me to excite your tenderness?

Lady PRIORY.

Utterly impossible.

BRONZELY.

I will then rouse your terror.

Lady PRIORY.

Even *that* I defy.

BRONZELY.

Lady Priory, you are in a lonely house of mine, where I am sole master, and all the servants slaves to my will.

[*Lady*

[*Lady Priory calmly takes out her knitting, draws a chair, and sits down to knit a pair of stockings.*]

BRONZELY [*aside.*]

This composure is worse than reproach—a woman who meant to yield would be outrageous.—[*Goes to speak to her, then turns away*].—By heaven she looks so respectable in that employment, I am afraid to insult her. [*After a struggle with himself*] Ah! don't you fear me?

Lady PRIORY.

No—for *your* fears will protect me—I have no occasion for my own.

BRONZELY.

What have I to fear?

Lady PRIORY.

You fear to lounge no more at routs, at balls, at operas, in Bond-street; no more to dance in circles, chat in side boxes, or roar at taverns: for you have observed enough upon the events of life to know—that an atrocious offence like violence to a woman, never escapes condign punishment.

BRONZELY.

Oh! for once, let your mind be feminine as your person—hear the vows——[*he seizes her hand—she rises—he starts back.*]

Lady PRIORY.

Ah! did not I tell you, you were afraid? 'Tis *you* who are afraid of *me*. [*He looks abashed.*] Come, you are ashamed, too—I see you are, and I pardon you.—In requital, suffer me to return home immediately. [*He shakes his head.*]—How! are not you ashamed of yourself?

BRONZELY.

I was not this moment——But now you mention it, I think I am.

Lady

Lady PRIORY.

Repent your folly then, and take me home.
[*hastily*].

BRONZELY.

Can you wish to go back to the man who has made this trial of your fidelity, and not resent his conduct?

Lady PRIORY.

Most assuredly I wish to return. But if you deliver me safe, perfectly safe from farther insult, it will be impossible for me not to shew resentment to Lord Priory.

BRONZELY.

Why only in that case?

Lady PRIORY.

Because, only in that case, you will make an impression on my heart—and I will resent his having exposed me to such a temptation.

BRONZELY.

Oh! I'll take you home directly—this moment.—I make an impression on your heart. William! —[*calling*]—I'll take you home directly. Here, John, Thomas, William—[*calling*] But, upon my life, it will be a hard task—I cannot do it—I am afraid—I am afraid I cannot.—Besides, what are we to say when we go back?—No matter what, so you will but think kindly of me. [*Enter SERVANT.*]—Order the horses to be put to the chaise; I am going back to London immediately. Quick! quick! Bid the man not be a moment, for fear I should change my mind.

SERVANT.

The chaise is ready now, Sir; for the post-boy was going back without unharnessing his horses.

BRONZELY.

Then tell him he must perform his journey in half an hour—If he is a moment longer, my resolution

lution will stop on the road. [*Exit Servant.*] I feel my good designs stealing away already—now they are flying rapidly. [*Taking Lady Priory's hand*]—Please to look another way—I shall certainly recant if I see you. [*Going*]—And now should I have the resolution to take you straight to your husband, you will have made a more contemptible figure of me by this last trick, than by any one you have played me. [*Exit, leading her off.*]

BRONZELY.

[*Without*] Tell the post-boy he need not wait—I have changed my mind—I sha'n't go to London to-night.

SCENE II. *A Room in a Prison.*

Enter Miss DORRILLON and Mr. NORBERRY.

Mr. NORBERRY.

You ought to have known it was in vain to send for me. Have not I repeatedly declared, that, till I heard from your father, you should receive nothing more from me than a bare subsistence?—I promise to allow you thus much, even in this miserable place: but do not indulge a hope that I can release you from it. [*She weeps—he goes to the door—then returns.*] I forgot to mention, that Mr. Mandred goes on board to-morrow for India; and, little as you may think of his sensibility, he seems concerned at the thought of quitting England without just bidding you farewell. He came with me hither—shall I send him up?

Miss DORRILLON.

Oh! no: for heaven's sake! Deliver me from his asperity, as you would save me from distraction.

Mr. NORBERRY.

Nay, 'tis for the last time—you had better see him.

him. You may be sorry, perhaps, you did not, when he is gone.

Miss DORRILLON.

No, no: I sha'n't be sorry.—Go, and excuse me—Go, and prevent his coming. I cannot see him.—[*Exit Mr. Norberry.*]—This would be aggravation of punishment, to shut me in a prison, and yet not shelter me from the insults of the world!

Enter Sir William.—[*She starts.*]

Sir WILLIAM.

— I know you have desired not to be troubled with my visit; and I come with all humility—I do not come, be assured, to reproach you.

Miss DORRILLON.

Unexpected mercy!

Sir WILLIAM.

No; though I have watched your course with anger, yet I do not behold its end, with triumph.

Miss DORRILLON.

It is not to your honour, that you think it necessary to give this statement of your mind.

Sir WILLIAM.

May be—but I never boasted of perfection, though I can boast of grief that I am so far beneath it. I can boast too, that, though I frequently give offence to others, I could never part with any one for ever (as I now shall with you), without endeavouring to make some atonement.

Miss DORRILLON.

You acknowledge, then, your cruelty to me?

Sir WILLIAM.

I acknowledge I have taken upon me to advise, beyond the liberty allowed by custom to one who has no apparent interest or authority.—But, not to repeat what has passed, I come, with the approbati-

M

en

on of your friend Mr. Norberry, to make a proposal to you for the future. [*he draws chairs, and they sit.*]

Miss DORRILLON.

What proposal?—What is it? [*eagerly.*]

Sir WILLIAM.

Mr. Norberry will not give either his money or his word to release you—But as I am rich—have lost my only child—and wish to do some good with my fortune, I will instantly lay down the money of which you are in want, upon certain conditions.

Miss DORRILLON.

Do I hear right? Is it possible I can find a friend in *you*?—a friend to relieve me from the depth of misery! Oh Mr. Mandred!

Sir WILLIAM.

Before you return thanks, hear the conditions on which I make the offer.

Miss DORRILLON.

Any conditions—What you please!

Sir WILLIAM.

You must promise, never, never to return to your former follies and extravagancies. [*She looks down.*] Do you hesitate? Do you refuse?—Won't you promise?

Miss DORRILLON.

I would, willingly—but for one reason.

Sir WILLIAM.

And what is that?

Miss DORRILLON.

The fear, I should not keep my word.

Sir WILLIAM.

You will, if your fear be real.

Miss DORRILLON.

It is real—It is even so great, that I have no hope.

Sir

Sir WILLIAM.

You refuse my offer then, and dismiss me? [*Rises.*]

Miss DORRILLON [*rising also.*]

With much reluctance.—But I cannot, indeed I cannot make a promise, unless I were to feel my heart wholly subdued; and my mind entirely convinced that I should never break it.—Sir, I am most sincerely obliged to you for the good which I am sure you designed me; but do not tempt me with the proposal again—do not place me in a situation, that might add to all my other afflictions, the remorse of having deceived you.

Sir WILLIAM [*after a pause.*]

Well, I will dispense with this condition—but there is another I must substitute in its stead.—Resolve to pass the remainder of your life, some few ensuing years at least, in the country. [*She starts.*]
Do you start at that?

Miss DORRILLON.

I do not love the country. I am always miserable while I am from London. Besides, there are no follies or extravagancies in the country.—Dear Sir, this is giving me up the first condition, and then forcing me to keep it.

Sir WILLIAM.

There, Madam, [*taking out his pocket-book*] I scorn to hold out hopes, and then destroy them. There is a thousand pounds free of all conditions [*she takes it*]
—extricate yourself from this situation, and be your own mistress to return to it when you please. [*Going.*]

Miss DORRILLON.

Oh, my benefactor, bid me farewell at parting—do not leave me in anger.

Sir WILLIAM.

How! will you dictate terms to me, while you reject all mine?

Miss DORRILLON.

Then only suffer me to express my gratitude —

Sir WILLIAM.

I will not hear you. [*going.*]

Miss DORRILLON.

Then hear me on another subject : a subject of much importance—indeed it is.

Sir WILLIAM.

Well !

Miss DORRILLON.

You are going to India immediately—It is possible that there, or at some place you will stop at on your way, you may meet with my father.

Sir WILLIAM.

Well !

Miss DORRILLON.

You have heard that I have expected him home for some time past, and that I still live in hopes —

Sir WILLIAM.

Well !—[*anxiously.*]

Miss DORRILLON.

If you should see him, and should be in his company—don't mention *me*.

Sir WILLIAM.

Not mention *you* ?

Miss DORRILLON.

At least, not my indiscretions—Oh ! I should die, if I thought *he* would ever know of them.

Sir WILLIAM.

Do you think he would not discover them himself, should he ever see you ?

Miss DORRILLON.

But he would not discover them all at once—I should be on my guard when he first came—My ill habits would steal on him progressively, and not be
half

half so shocking, as if you were to vociferate them all in a breath.

Sir WILLIAM.

To put you out of apprehension at once—your father is not coming home—nor will he ever return to his own country.

Miss DORRILLON [starting.]

You seem to speak from certain knowledge—Oh! heavens! is he not living?

Sir WILLIAM.

Yes, living—but under severe affliction—fortune has changed, and all his hopes are blasted.

Miss DORRILLON.

“Fortune changed!”—In poverty?—my father in poverty?—*[weeping.]*—Oh, Sir, excuse, what may perhaps appear an ill compliment to your bounty; but to me, the greatest reverence I can pay to it.—You are going to that part of the world where he is; take this precious gift back, search out my father, and let *him* be the object of your beneficence.—*[Forces it into his hand.]*—I shall be happy in this prison, indeed I shall, so I can but give a momentary relief to my dear, dear father.—*[Sir William takes out his handkerchief.]*—You weep!—This present, perhaps, would be but poor alleviation of his sufferings—perhaps he is in sickness; or a prisoner! Oh! if he is, release me instantly, and take me with you to the place of his confinement.

Sir WILLIAM.

What! quit the joys of London?

Miss DORRILLON.

On such an errand, I would quit them all without a sigh—And here I make a solemn promise to you—*[kneeling.]*

Sir WILLIAM.

Hold, you may wish to break it.

Miss

Miss DORRILLON.

Never—exact what vow you will on *this* occasion, I will make, and keep it.—[*Enter Mr. NORBERRY. —She rises.*]*—Oh! Mr. Norberry, he has been telling me such things of my father —*

Mr. NORBERRY.

Has he? Then kneel again — call *him* by that name — and implore him not to disown *you* for his child.

Miss DORRILLON.

Good heaven! — I dare not — I dare not do as you require. [*She faints on Norberry.*]

Sir WILLIAM [*going to her.*]

My daughter! — My child! —

Mr. NORBERRY.

At those names she revives.—[*She raises her head, but expresses great agitation.*]*—Come, let us quit this wretched place—the will be better then. My carriage is at the door. You will follow us.*

[*Exeunt, leading off Miss Dorrillon.*]

Sir WILLIAM.

Follow you! — Yes—and I perceive that, in spite of philosophy, justice, or resolution, I could follow you all the world over. [*Exit.*]

SCENE III. *Another Room in the Prison.*

Lady MARY discovered sitting in a dejected posture, at a miserable table.

Lady MARY.

Provoking! not an answer to one of my pathetic letters!—nor a creature to come and condole with me!—Oh that I could but regain my liberty before my disgrace is announced in the public prints — I could then boldly contradict every paragraph that asserted

asserted it—by “ We have authority to say, no such
“ event ever took place.”

Enter a Man belonging to the prison.

MAN.

One Sir George Evelyn is here, Madam ; he will not name your name, because it sha’n’t be made public ; but he desires you will permit him to come and speak a few words to you, provided you are the young lady from Grosvenor-street, with whom he has the pleasure of being acquainted.

Lady MARY.

Yes, yes, I am the young lady from Grosvenor-street — my compliments to Sir George, I am that lady ; intimately acquainted with him ; and entreat he will walk up. [*Exit the Man.*] This is a most fortunate incident in my tragedy ! Sir George no doubt takes me for Miss Dorrillon ; yet I am sure he is too much the man of gallantry and good breeding to leave me in this place, although he visits me by mistake.

Sir GEORGE EVELYN [*speaking as he enters.*]

Sir GEORGE.

Madam, you are free—the doors of the prison are open — my word is passed for the — [*He stops—looks around—expresses surprise and confusion.*]

Lady MARY [*curtsying very low.*]

Sir George, I am under the most infinite obligation !—Words are too poor to convey the sense I have of this act of friendship—but I trust my gratitude will for ever —

Sir GEORGE [*confused.*]

Madam—really—I ought to apologise for the liberty I have taken.

Lady MARY.

No liberty at all, Sir George— at least no apology
is

is necessary—I insist on hearing no excuses. A virtuous action requires no preface, no prologue, no ceremony—and surely, if one action be more noble and generous than another, it must be that one, where an act of benevolence is conferred, and the object, an object of total indifference to the liberal benefactor. — Generous man, good evening.—Call me a coach. [*going.*]

Sir GEORGE.

Stay, Madam—I beg leave to say——

Lady MARY.

——Not a word—I won't hear a word—my thanks shall drown whatever you have to say.

Enter the former MAN.

Sir GEORGE.

Pray, Sir, did not you tell me, you had a very young lady under your care?

MAN.

Yes, Sir, so I had—but she, it seems, has just been released, and is gone away with the gentleman who paid the debt.

Lady MARY.

Do you mean Miss Dorrillon?

MAN.

I mean the other lady from Grosvenor-street.

Sir GEORGE.

Who can have released her?

Lady MARY.

Some friend of *mine*, I dare say, by mistake—Well, if it is so, she is extremely welcome to the good fortune which was designed for *me*. For my part, I could not submit to an obligation from every one—scarcely from any one—and from no one with so little regret as I submit to it from Sir George Evelyn.

[*Exit, curtsying to Sir George.*

Sir

Sir GEORGE.

Distraction ! the first disappointment is nothing to this second ! to the reflection that Miss Dorrillon has been set at liberty by any man on earth except myself. *[Exit.]*

SCENE IV. *An Apartment at Mr. NORBERRY'S.*

Enter Lord PRIORY.

Lord PRIORY.

What a situation is mine ! I cannot bear solitude, and am ashamed to see company ! I cannot bear to think on the ungrateful woman, and yet I can think of nothing else ! It was her conduct which I imagined had alone charmed me ; but I perceive her power over my heart, though that conduct is changed !

Enter Mr. NORBERRY, Sir WILLIAM, and Miss DORRILLON.

Mr. NORBERRY.

My dear Lord Priory, exert your spirits to receive and congratulate a friend of mine. Sir William Dorrillon [*presenting him*] father to this young woman, whose failings he has endeavoured to correct under the borrowed name of Mandred.

Sir WILLIAM.

And with that fictitious name, I hope to disburthen myself of the imputation of having ever offered an affront to my Lord Priory. [*He takes Lord Priory aside, and they talk together.*]

Enter Sir GEORGE EVELYN.

Sir GEORGE.

Is it possible what I have heard is true ? was it
N Mr.

Mr. Mandred who has restored Miss Dorrillon to the protection of Mr. Norberry?

Sir WILLIAM [*coming forward.*]

No, Sir George, I have now taken her under my own protection.

Sir GEORGE.

By what title, Sir?

Sir WILLIAM.

A very tender one—don't be alarmed—I am her father.

Sir GEORGE.

Sir William Dorrillon? [*They talk apart.*]

Enter LADY MARY.

Lady MARY.

Has there been any intelligence of my Lady Priory yet? [*sees Miss Dorrillon.*] My dear Dorrillon, a lover of yours has done the civilest thing by me!—As I live, here he is. How do you do, Sir George? I suppose you have all heard the news of Bronzely running away with——

Miss DORRILLON.

Hush!—Lord Priory is here.

Lady MARY.

Oh, he knows it—and it is not improper to remind him of it—it will teach him humility.

Lord PRIORY.

I *am* humble, Lady Mary, and own I have had a better opinion of your sex than I ought to have had.

Lady MARY.

You mean, of your management of us; of your instructions, restrictions, and corrections.

Enter SERVANT.

SERVANT.

Lady Priory and Mr. Bronzely.

Lady

Lady MARY.

What of them?

SERVANT.

They are here.

Lord PRIORY.

I said she'd preserve her fidelity! Did not I always say so? Have I wavered once? Did I not always tell you all that she was only making game of Bronzely? Did I not tell you all so?

Enter BRONZELY and Lady PRIORY.

BRONZELY.

Then, indeed, my Lord, you said truly; for I return the arrantest blockhead——

Lord PRIORY.

I always said you would! But how is it? Where have you been? What occasion for a post-chaise? Instantly explain, or I shall forfeit that dignity of a husband to which, in those degenerate times, I have almost an exclusive right.

BRONZELY.

To reinstate you, my Lord, in those honours, I accompany Lady Priory; and beg public pardon for the opinion I once publicly professed, of your want of influence over her affections.

Lord PRIORY.

Do you hear? Do you all hear? Lady Mary, do you hear?

BRONZELY.

Taking advantage of your permission to call on her, by stratagem I induced her to quit your house, lest restraint might there act as my enemy. But your authority, your prerogative, your honour attached to her, under my roof. She has held those rights sacred, and compelled even *me* to revere them.

WIVES AS THEY WERE,

Lord PRIORY.

Do you all hear? I was sure it would turn out so!

Lady MARY.

This is the first time I ever knew the gallant's word taken for a woman's honour.

Lord PRIORY.

I will take her own word—the tongue which for eleven years has never in the slightest instance deceived me, I will believe upon all occasions. My dear wife, boldly pronounce before this company that you return to me with the same affection and respect, and the self-same contempt for this man—*[to Bronzely]*—you ever had. *[A short pause.]*

Lady MARY.

She makes no answer.

Lord PRIORY.

Hush! Hush! She is going to speak.—*[Another pause]*—Why, why don't you speak?

Lady PRIORY.

Because I am at a loss what to say.

Lady MARY.

Hear, hear, hear—do you all hear?

Lord PRIORY.

Can you be at a loss to declare you hate Mr. Bronzely?

Lady PRIORY.

I do *not* hate him.

Lady MARY.

I was sure it would turn out so.

Lord PRIORY.

Can you be at a loss to say you love me?

[She appears embarrassed.]

Lady MARY.

She is at a loss.

Lord PRIORY.

How! Don't you fear me?

Lady

Lady PRIORY.

Yes.

Lady MARY.

She speaks plainly to that question.

Lord PRIORY.

You know I love truth—speak plainly to all their curiosity requires.

Lady PRIORY.

Since you command it then, my Lord—I confess that Mr. Bronzely's conduct towards me has caused a kind of sentiment in my heart——

Lord PRIORY.

Hah! What?

Lady MARY.

You must believe her—"she has told you truth for eleven years."

Lady PRIORY.

A sensation which——

Lord PRIORY.

Stop—any truth but this I could have borne.—Reflect on what you are saying—Consider what you are doing—Are these your primitive manners?

Lady PRIORY.

I should have continued those manners, had I known none but primitive men. But to preserve ancient austerity, while, by my husband's consent, I am assailed by modern gallantry, would be the task of a Stoic, and not of his female slave.

Lady MARY.

Do you hear? Do you all hear? My Lord, do *you* hear?

Lord PRIORY.

I do—I do—and though the sound distracts me, I cannot doubt her word.

Lady PRIORY.

It gives me excessive joy to hear you say so: because you will not then doubt me when I add——
that

that gratitude, for his restoring me so soon to you, is the only sentiment he has inspired.

Lord PRIORY.

Then my management of a wife is right after all!

Mr. NORBERRY.

Mr. Bronzely, as your present behaviour has in great measure atoned for your former actions, I will introduce to your acquaintance my friend Sir William Dorrillon.

BRONZELY.

Mandred, Sir William Dorrillon!

Sir WILLIAM.

And considering, Sir, that upon one or two occasions I have been honoured with your confidence—you will not be surprised, if the first command I lay upon my daughter, is—to take refuge from your pursuits, in the protection of Sir George Evelyn.

Sir GEORGE.

And may I hope, Maria?

Miss DORRILLON.

No—I will instantly put an end to all your hopes.

Sir GEORGE.

How!

Sir WILLIAM.

By raising you to the summit of your wishes. Alarmed at my severity, she has owned her readiness to become the subject of a milder government.

Sir GEORGE.

She shall never repine at the election she has made.

Lord PRIORY.

But, Sir George, if you are a prudent man, you will fix your eyes on my little domestic state, and guard against a rebellion.

Lady



Lady PRIORY.

Not the rigour of its laws has ever induced me to wish them abolished.

BRONZELY [*to Lady Priory.*]

Dear Lady, you have made me think with reverence on the matrimonial compact: and I demand of you, Lady Mary—if, in consequence of former overtures, I should establish a legal authority over you, and become your chief magistrate—would you submit to the same controul to which Lady Priory submits?

Lady MARY.

Any controul, rather than have no chief magistrate at all.

Sir GEORGE [*to Miss Dorrillon.*]

And what do you say to this?

Miss DORRILLON.

Simply one sentence—A maid of the present day shall become a wife like those—of former times.

The scene closes—She comes forward.

A D D R E S S ,

WRITTEN BY MR. TAYLOR;

SPOKEN BY MISS WALLIS.

WELL, female critics, what's the sentence, say—
Can you with kindness treat this saucy play,
That gives to ancient dames the wreath of praise
And boldly censures those of modern days?

Bring

Bring us good husbands first, and, on my life,
 For every one we'll shew as good a wife.
 Whate'er the errors in the nuptial state,
 Man sets th' example to his passive mate;
 While all the virtues the proud sex can claim
 From female influence caught the gen'rous flame.
 Nay, though our gallant rulers of the main
 With force resistless crush the pride of Spain
 'Tis WOMAN triumphs—that inspiring charm
 With tenfold vigour nerves the hero's arm:
 For KING and COUNTRY though they nobly bleed,
 The smile of BEAUTY is their dearest meed,
 And valiant tars should still be Beauty's care
 Since 'tis “the brave alone deserve the fair.”



